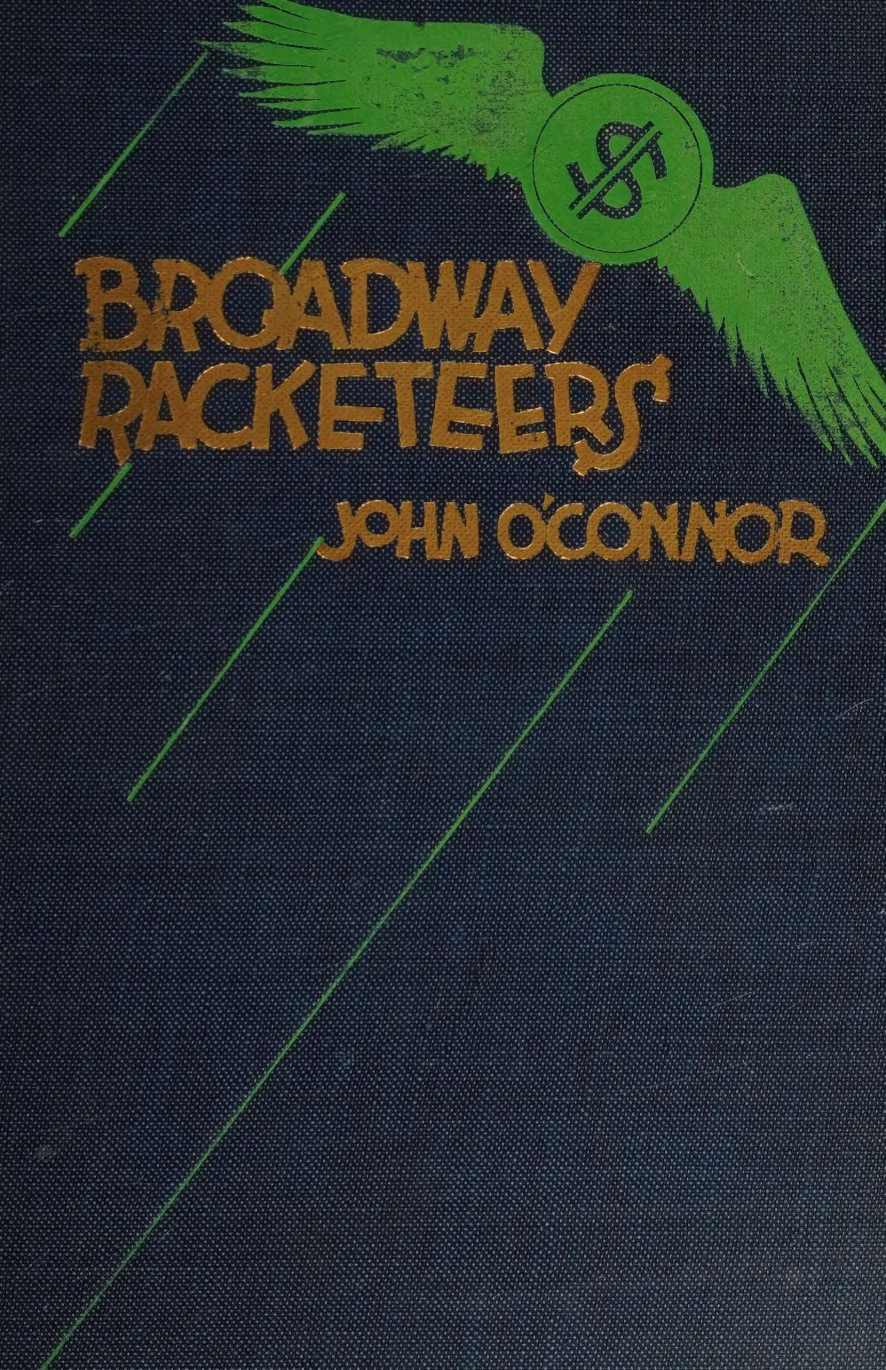
BROADWAY
RACKETEERS
JOHN O'CONNOR

9 89
STRAND PRICE
$ 300

[illegible]

Hallie Wills
from Ida
Christmas of '28.

BROADWAY RACKETEERS

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_S0-ADK-450

BROADWAY RACKETEERS

By

JOHN O'CONNOR

New York
HORACE LIVERIGHT
1928

Copyright : 1928 : *by*
JOHN O'CONNOR
Printed in the United States

First printing, November, 1928
Second printing, November, 1928
Third printing, November, 1928

CONTENTS

		PAGE
INTRODUCTION		vii
CHAPTER		
I.	CHEATING CHEATERS	13
II.	SHEET PASSING	28
III.	SELLING STIFFS	43
IV.	THE GLIM DROPPER	49
V.	GREEN GOODS	55
VI.	BROADWAY ANGELS	72
VII.	THE IRON HAT	83
VIII.	CHARITY CHISELERS	90
IX.	THE TIP RACKET	102
X.	DAYTON DON, P.A.	117
XI.	FIRE-PROOFERS	129
XII.	FREE LOT RACKET	138
XIII.	LAYING THE NOTE	144
XIV.	STEER JOINTS	151
XV.	WATERED BOOZE	160
XVI.	THE PAY OFF	167
XVII.	"IN THE RED"	180
XVIII.	THE PUFF RACKET	188
XIX.	WE BOYS	200

CHAPTER PAGE

XX. Matching Coins 206

XXI. Dice Cheaters 212

XXII. The Tat 221

XXIII. Parlor Hijacking 226

XXIV. The Interstate Shake 233

XXV. Sidewalk Hustlers 243

Glossary 249

INTRODUCTION

On Broadway—the Alley of wit, wealth and wisdom —most colorful of all characters is the Racketeer!

He comprises the élite of Underworld life, in one sense, and the sorriest dregs of crimeland in another. Every deal manipulated around a crude, or clever evasion of law, is categorized a racket and the participants, racketeers.

Recording and reviewing the various rackets devised by the boys of Broadway for the Johnny Babbitts of the suburbs is rather an interesting pastime. To place them in the order of their importance is quite another task. Every sharpshooter honestly believes his own racket tops everything else in the field. And if vanity were music, every racketeer would constitute a fully equipped brass band.

There are rackets and rackets, some semi-legitimate and safe from official interference. The great majority however come under the legal classification of larceny with the inevitable vacation "Up the river" generally following a fall where the rap will stand up. To the racketeer, every racket is on the up and up. The

greatest sin is to be nailed with the goods. The prospect of a petty larceny rap doesn't bother a bird hot after a high score, for history proves that a sucker seldom squawks after going the route. As a rule they take the medicine as a necessary portion of Broadway's education. And even should the Law Horrible occasionally ruffle the usual tranquillity of the racketeer's routine, the average squeal can always be doctored between the station house and the Magistrate's bench. Consequently the men who made the nation's laws merely wasted good time and considerable money in the estimation of that element whose chief stock in trade consists of nimble wits and well-oiled tongues.

The fellow who nibbles at the hustler's bait generally has a streak of larceny hidden somewhere in his own system, and after getting an eye full of the layout, goes home and tries it on his own towners. The smart racketeer doesn't pick out the boys with hay wisps dangling from beneath their hats, but selects by preference the half-smart egg who thinks he is three jumps ahead of Broadway himself.

In this parade—of Racketeers—rubbing shoulders with the lower-browed, stronger-armed stick-up artist, who by brutality takes what he can and where and when—one sees pass the college bred confidence man, who looks exclusively to the upper strata of society for

a handsome living, paradoxically claimed as an inherited debt against the world. There you find the suave tongued swindler, whose chief stock in trade is sleek appearance and convincing speech, breaking bread across the table in a buffet lunch room with the coke-filled lush worker, who plies his thieving business on helpless drunks. One brushes by the fur-robed gun moll, leaning on the arm of her boy friend, the key-man in a pay-off mob.

One sees the race track hustler en route to the course, accompanied by the chap operating a shake-down racket, the latter's main convincer being a Federal agent's badge, stolen or made-to-order. If it be late afternoon, one observes the dice cheater and card shark just ambling along for breakfast. You may be sure it is late afternoon since such racketeers are in action only between midnight and dawn.

Those with the eye and wisdom tooth cut perceive the lady in scarlet counting the night's receipts—the intake of a good-bad night's work; for she is hustling to the corner drug store for fresh supplies of cosmetic material and whatever other necessaries of her profession she needs. Nor is she unescorted; for close behind is the mongrel of the mob, the pimp.

Others there are, too—the well-groomed sheet-passer and the note-layer. Both, indeed, are expert in

the light labor brigade though necessarily blessed with an abundance of gall and poise, their chief requisites of success in their respective lines. The beer and alky runners, the junk pusher, the cannon mob and the booster; the hoop dropper, the fire-proofer and the stock-steerer; also the tat-man and the hijacker. . . . All compose the great army of Broadway racketeers.

Like all seemingly difficult card tricks, every racket seems simple when exposed. And so most of them are. Strange, but the thoroughly honest citizen is usually immune from the majority of rackets; for the wise racketeer baits only so that the nibblers reveal themselves possessors of a streak of larceny. Whosoever would heed Poor Richard's warning—"Buy what thou hast no need of and ere long thou wilt sell thy necessities"—will never bring home the cheaply purchased sealed bag only to find the cat inside dead.

THE AUTHOR.

BROADWAY RACKETEERS

CHAPTER I

CHEATING CHEATERS

CHEATING a cheater is far better fun than cheating a chump. It's safer too. But there is always that element of danger shadowing the racketeer in quest of easy money, for on one side he has the combined forces of law and order to combat, while he is forever conscious of the presence of a more persistent and relentless foe, back in the shadows of the rear, the burning brand of dishonor in the world of crime and the inevitable consequences.

About the nearest approach to a law-proof racket ever introduced around New York is credited to one Jack McCauley, a young Scotch-American, who, strangely enough, became snarled up in the law's net through his own good-heartedness. When Assistant District Attorney Wahl of New York County addressed the jury of men selected to determine McCauley's guilt or innocence, he advised them the defendant was guilty of cheating cheaters.

Accompanying McCauley in General Sessions Court, before Judge Otto Rosalsky, was a score of others, all

indicted for the same type of offense. The defendants presented the strangest sight ever seen in that stately old hall of justice. Half the number were elderly men, many over seventy years of age, while the others were all dapper-looking lads in early life, capable of passing for a class of collegians about to receive diplomas. The records show they were indicted in couples, as they worked the racket, the outside man being a youngster, the old men acting as foils. McCauley had passed the secret of his scheme up and down the line.

Had he kept the racket to himself, as he might have been expected to, since he's half Scotch, Jack might still be operating with safety, but the game was so easily played, and the territory so large, he tipped off a few friends and in a short time he found himself bucking a field of homemade competition. While he laughingly admitted the idea wasn't copyrighted, he agreed he could have done better by opening a school with a nominal fee for tuition.

McCauley was a great talker, a genuine high pressure salesman. Graced with a frame that would do justice to an Olympic champion, with facial features suggesting a movie star, he stood out in a crowd like a sunflower in a garden of weeds. His voice was a rich baritone and barring the slightest burr of the Scot, now and then, his diction was flawless. And the

accent, when noticeable, seemed to give added value to his conversation, calling attention, as it did, to some important point. Always dressed in the height of fashion, yet never wearing anything that might be classified in the Broadway code as "loud," McCauley could pass anywhere as a prosperous business man. Added to this he had that invaluable faculty of establishing the "Good Fellow" atmosphere about himself wherever he went. He could make a quarter ring like a five-dollar gold piece when spending money, and Jack was a liberal spender.

He seldom drifted into the vernacular of the racketeer, although he knew the lingo of the underworld in its every phase. By him a girl was never referred to as a "skirt," "filly," "twist" or "broad." Money was money as McCauley spoke and never called "scratch," "kale," "sugar" or "dough" as the boys of the street describe it in their own language. In fact any strange racketeer might label McCauley on first sight as a likely prospect for a score, but the sharpshooter who aimed to clip him for anything beyond the right time would be wise to padlock his own poke.

McCauley was originally a real estate salesman. When that business began to slow up he drifted to New York and located in the Broadway sector. Here he mingled with racketeers in many lines, the dice

cheaters, pay-off mobs, pool hustlers and what not. A good listener, a better observer and instinctively close-mouthed, McCauley learned his initial lesson of Broadway cheaply and thoroughly. He wisely concluded he was not properly cast for the rôle of racketeer, at least such as those with whom he had come in contact.

He decided to invest his savings in some legitimate enterprise and accordingly advertised as a prospective investor in the "Business Opportunities" column of the *New York Times*. The following day brought him scores of letters from local stock brokerage houses offering golden opportunities in projects that needed only cash to develop. Jack visited several houses, patiently listened to the high powered canvass of the house salesmen and bought nothing.

The sing-song monologue of a stock salesman is a work of dramatic art and McCauley stored every sentence back in the vault of his retentive memory. He made a systematic study of the stock business, learned how it was sold, procured copies of sucker lists and thoroughly investigated the table of salary, commission and percentage by which the salesmen worked. He perfected and memorized a dozen short selling talks of his own and from then on let it be known around the Broadway haunts that such was his line.

McCauley's next move was to locate an elaborately furnished apartment on upper Riverside Drive, overlooking the Hudson River. He was fortunate enough to sub-let just such a place from a wealthy couple who were sailing abroad. His good luck continued, for shortly after taking possession he discovered that one of the many closets held a stock of excellent pre-war wines and liquors. A skeleton key soon brought these within drinking distance. His next step was to find a reliable working partner. For this important rôle he selected Tip Apwell, an old time advertising solicitor. Tip was sixty-five years old, or thereabouts, a kindly-faced old gent, refined and polished through years of selling experience, and thoroughly capable of intelligently discussing almost any of the popular topics of the time.

To give the layout the genuine home-like appearance, McCauley went entirely out of his line and doubled up with one of the ladies of the mob. He inherited her from a forger who was doing a stretch up the river. Mollie was a demure little miss. Provided with a Pomeranian, a parasol and a Park Avenue background, she could easily qualify as a New England finishing school student on vacation. When acting for a sucker Mollie appeared as innocent as a babe in arms. But out with the mob she loved to give her

"wisdom of the world" an airing. And, figuratively speaking, Mollie had traveled mighty little. She took delight in seasoning her sentences with wise-cracks of the underworld. Some of her speeches might sound natural coming from the mouth of a yegg, but as delivered by Mollie they sounded like a curse from a clergyman. And invariably she had her slang all garbled up, proving that Mollie had a reasonablly good pair of ears but a decidedly poor memory.

With his scheme perfected and rehearsed and the stage properly set, McCauley went right into action. Armed with a list of brokerage houses whose specialty was the promotion of questionable stock projects, he began systematically to make the rounds. His initial call was at a broker's office on Fifth Avenue where an oil stock was being featured. McCauley represented himself as a salesman seeking employment. He advised the head of the firm that he had a list of clients, many owning large estates down on Long Island, and felt confident he could interest them in that particular portion of the blue sky the house was offering for sale.

He explained that he expected no salary whatever, but drove a hard bargain on commission. He wanted nothing until the sale was actually made and the cash handed over, but then he wanted his commission in full and, if paid by check, the latter must be certified

before accepted. He went into deep details on the subject, employing all the stock terms of the profession intelligently, and left not the slightest doubt in the broker's mind that he was everything he claimed to be. He left, armed with literature and the usual statistics, promising to return in a day or so.

This routine was continued for three or four days until McCauley had exhausted the list of brokers who answered his original advertisement. He then visited Dun and Bradstreet and procured the commercial rating on each proposition in hand. If any of the stock showed the slightest promise, McCauley relegated it to the nearest refuse barrel. He retained only those issues which were classified by the rating agent as pure bunk.

Renting a high powered car with a liveried chauffeur, he made his second visit to the brokerage house, calling on each one in the same order as before. This time he appeared fairly bursting with enthusiasm. Closeted with the head of the firm, McCauley briefly explained that he had a gigantic sale all lined up, but preferred the broker to complete the deal himself. Occasionally drifting into the lingo of the racketeer, McCauley would permit his quarry to conclude that he was a fast worker, one who would wink at the limitations of the law provided the assured reward was suffi-

ciently large. He even would intimate that he knew the stock in question wasn't all it was cracked up to be, but this fact wouldn't bother his conscience once the commission check was in his hands.

He would then proceed to disclose his immediate plans. He had in tow a retired judge from the Middle West who was anxious to invest some of his surplus capital in a good oil stock. McCauley had attended to the preliminary selling campaign, but it needed the broker to supply the necessary convincer and close the sale. The old man was nursing a highly developed attack of gout and was accessible for the final canvass right at the moment. McCauley's car was at the curb if the broker cared to dash uptown immediately.

Needless to say nothing short of an earthquake or sudden death would prevent the broker from dashing uptown immediately and soon the couple were on their way up the Drive. As they traveled McCauley explained the presence of the chauffeur and car. His clientele required a polished front and with many of them located at distant points, it was really cheaper to travel by machine than by train. The overhead expense was reasonably light and easily smothered by his commissions. With his suave delivery, Jack easily sold himself to the broker as exactly what he originally purported to be, a successful high pressure sales-

man with a select list of wealthy suckers on his staff.

Arriving at the apartment the pair were ushered in by a Jap butler, procured through an employment agency by McCauley for a small monthly wage and board. Here the broker found everything precisely as described by his salesman. Tip was seated in a big, comfortable chair, his feet resting on a hassock, while Mollie was perched at his side reading aloud to him. Barely visible on an adjoining table was a pile of certificates, some with gilt edges and others bearing a striking resemblance to Liberty Bonds. McCauley had collected them here and there solely to complete the picture, although in actual value they would probably bring at most about three cents from a paper collector as junk.

The broker was presented to the "Judge" and his "niece" and the business of the moment became the immediate topic of conversation. Meanwhile Mollie remembered it was time for the "Judge" to have his tonic and the Jap tip-toed in with a quart of champagne, properly chilled and with glasses for three. Corona cigars were also passed around and the conference started.

The "Judge" listened attentively to the broker's spiel, occasionally interrupting with an appropriate question, all carefully detailed and rehearsed in ad-

vance, and shortly thereafter the broker began to realize that a big sale was about to materialize.

The "Judge" allowed he was deeply interested; McCauley had sold him some good stock on another occasion and enjoyed his complete confidence. He hated to see such a great opportunity slip by, but unfortunately all his surplus cash was tied up for the moment in a deal and would not be available for at least a month. However, the "Judge" had a plan. He proposed to subscribe for $100,000 worth of the securities, giving the broker, in lieu of cash, his personal note for thirty days for the amount. The stock was to remain in escrow with the broker until the note was satisfied, a memorandum of the sale being sufficient to complete the transaction.

The note was made out to the broker and signed by the "Judge" with the understanding that, under no circumstances, would the broker attempt to discount it or convert it into cash, in any way, until it fell due. Another bottle of grape was uncorked, the trio toasted in turn, and McCauley and his friend departed, as Mollie resumed her seat and continued her rôle as reader.

On the return trip to the broker's office, money matters were never broached. Alone with his man in the latter's private quarters, Jack would then begin un-

covering his box of tricks. He would enumerate the list of clients he dealt with, assuring the broker he had several others in similar or better financial circumstances than his friend the "Judge." In fact he declared an intention of making a trip through Long Island the following week with a view to marketing this very issue with some of them.

Explaining that he expected no commission on the sale to the "Judge" until the note was satisfied, McCauley then proceeded to sound out the broker on the possibility of procuring some expense money in advance, to cover the incidental costs of the forthcoming trip, this to be deducted from his commission on any sales he might make. Then, of course, the broker must remember, whatever he advanced was practically guaranteed through the sale just made. Glibly detailing the usual expenses of such a journey, entertaining fees, upkeep of the car and hotel charges, McCauley would opine that an advance of something like $300 would be acceptable and sincerely appreciated.

Salesmen of the McCauley type were apparently a rarity, for he seldom left a brokerage house without the check. Some few bargained for a less amount, but the majority came through without a whimper and some even forced him to take more than the amount suggested. These checks were all deposited by McCauley

in his own account at a local bank, so that no suspicions would be aroused through an indirect clearing.

McCauley, Tip and Mollie entertained from three to six brokers daily at the Riverside Drive apartment, Tip varying his rôle from time to time. To some he was a retired banker, others a country farmer and to one he assumed the rôle of a minister of the gospel. Each broker was presented with a thirty-day note and in no instance did Tip accept any stock certificates or other collateral.

The trio would alternate their time between the uptown location and a tour of the Long Island towns. While motoring through the latter, McCauley would make his second, third and often his fourth touch on the same broker. Never employing the mails as a means of communication, he thus steered clear of Federal prosecution. Arriving in a town he would register at the best hotel, establishing the date of his arrival and departure by having a local notary acknowledge some sort of fake receipt. He would then dispatch telegrams to his list of brokers, advising them that prospects looked bright and a big sale was imminent. The following day he would wire for additional expense money, sometimes utilizing the long distance telephone for a personal canvass. And strangely enough the great majority to whom such requests were

addressed would reply favorably, wiring him the amount asked for.

As the dates loomed in view for the presentation of the various notes given out by Tip, McCauley would forward the broker a carefully prepared letter signed by the "Judge" in which the latter declared that an investigation disclosed the stock as worthless and he accordingly had instructed his bankers to refuse payment on the note, politely requesting it be returned to him immediately by messenger or mail. Enclosed in the letter would be a duplicate of the report received by McCauley from the rating agency, thus leaving the astounded broker without an argument to reopen the sale.

This program continued without interruption for months, but every racket has its finish, and when McCauley's copyists began to multiply in number, they foolishly neglected to carry out the original plan to the last letter. Responsible brokers rebelled against the army of racketeers that deluged them with such propositions and the noise of the racket soon penetrated the walls of Police Headquarters, disturbing the peace and calm of Detectives Brown and Mayer, whose specialty was to ferret out that species of racketeer who bilked the gentry of Wall Street and its environs for a living.

Brown and Mayer opened a brokerage office of their own on Fifth Avenue and advertised for salesmen. One by one the boys walked in, told their tale and accepted the checks that returned an indictment apiece. A few squeals did the rest and soon the entire gang was rounded up. The line-up presented a laughable sight to the detectives of the Greater City. The young men supported their elderly partners on the platform as the masked coppers eyed them for future identification. Some of the old fellows died before reaching trial. The District Attorney managed to gather enough complainants to insure a conviction and the majority of those indicted pleaded guilty and were rewarded with suspended sentences for saving the state the time and money essential for a trial.

McCauley and one other defendant stood trial and when the verdict of guilty was returned listened to a scorching lecture from the bench. Sentenced to an indeterminate term from six months to three years, McCauley was back on the big street in less than a year.

While he was serving his time Mollie rejoined her penman friend who meanwhile had completed his term. Tip fell a victim to pneumonia. McCauley invested his savings in a farm up the state and the racket has long since been tagged as useless, for following the

exposé and the notoriety given the trial, the only way to separate a stockholder from expense money is to tie him up, render him unconscious with chloroform and take it while he's asleep.

That would be classified as burglary and burglary isn't listed in the roster of Broadway rackets.

CHAPTER II

SHEET PASSING

A FINANCIAL statistician once declared that one out of every five male persons in New York City passes a bad check during life, many of course doing it innocently, but the greater majority accompanying the act with a portion of criminal intent.

This surprising table of percentage admittedly is caused by the activity of the professional forger, who has selected the title of "Sheet Passing" for his racket. "Sheet Passing" is a dangerous game, for the penalty following conviction is hardly commensurate with the chance taken or the profit derived. The banking interests have so framed the laws around this crime that the culprit, when caught, faces a half dozen indictments, the major one being forgery, and all punishable by long terms in state's prison.

And still we find "Sheet Passing" practiced daily by regular organized mobs, for this racket is easily worked and requires little more than nerve and a good appearance. It seems a simple matter to build up acceptable identification, and there are countless spots

where a check looks quite as good as actual currency and where the sucker's faith in human nature hasn't been warped by warnings and specific instances of cleverly schemed frauds.

Whenever racketeers assemble and the subject of conversation deals with the art of passing sheets or dropping maps, the alternative term employed in the jargon of the underworld, one invariably hears the name of Dick Barry, recognized, in and out of prison, as the master workman of that particular craft.

Barry was reared in Harlem, and while he is registered under that name in both Sing Sing Prison and the Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta, it is not his own. Barry came from a respected family, being one of three sons, the other two, reputable and prosperous business men. His parents were English. They came to New York in early life where the three boys were born. He was graduated from Public School No. 5 in the year 1900 or thereabouts, and was recognized as one of the honor students of the graduating class. Reared in a district that turned out its top quota of bricklayers, iron workers, plumbers, etc., a section which pointed to this record with due pride—Barry religiously shunned all forms of manual labor.

In his schooldays he indulged mildly in athletics, but early concluded the effort required was a bit too

strenuous, and thereafter devoted his spare time to indoor sports exclusively, a field in which he excelled. He shook a wicked hoof on any dance floor and his skill with a pool cue was amazing.

To the boys in Harlem it seemed that Barry was destined for a professional future, something that would provide him an opportunity to commercialize his debonair appearance and his ability to wear clothes. Equipped with a splendid physique, Barry had evidently been blessed with a second helping when they distributed good looks and complexion, his fine soft skin and rosy cheeks earning him the nickname of "Butter" from his schoolmates.

Shortly after graduation Barry drifted down into the canyon of white lights and soon became lost to Harlem and the scenes of his youth. He disliked whisky and while he possessed all the attributes that might make him a favorite with the fair sex, he preferred the company of men and shared his love with only one woman whom he later married and who bore him a son. The latter, now grown to manhood, knows nothing of his father's past, believing him dead. His wife divorced him when he went to jail the second time.

Barry became a frequenter of various dives on East Fourteenth Street where pickpockets used to meet and

share their spoils. These cannon mobs, as they are self-styled, soon learned that Barry was a drifter, without a racket, but one who could be trusted nevertheless. A cannon mob, it might be explained here, generally consists of three members. In the language of the racketeer wherever two or more persons work together on a racket they are referred to as a mob. The members of a cannon mob are the wire, the stall and the lammer. The wire is the nimble fingered individual who extracts the prize from the victim's pocket; the stall distracts his attention while the wire is working and it is also his duty to interrupt pursuit by conveniently getting in every one's way; the lammer is the chap who takes the stolen goods and disappears with all the evidence.

These mobs were generally made up of aliens or men of alien extraction, few having much education. To them Barry was useful in his own way, composing letters to members of the gang in stir, or arranging for the disposition of negotiable stocks or bonds lifted during a day's campaign on the street cars. When a cannon took a fall, the term used for those arrested, Barry was entrusted with the so-called fall money to arrange for a bondsman and a mouthpiece—as lawyers are termed by the gentry of the underworld—to represent the defendant at trial. With no police rec-

ord to question his right of interest, Barry would represent himself as a boyhood friend of the man jailed and learn what he could of the evidence against him. Quite often he managed to fix a case before the date of hearing and through such activities earned the everlasting appreciation and confidence of the downtown hustlers.

Meanwhile Barry's brain was busy concocting a racket of his own. While he, like every other racketeer, despised the thought of pocket picking, he found a way whereby he could use the boys of the cannon mobs to his own advantage.

Being an able penman, he selected forgery for his future calling. But he determined to play the racket as safely as possible and avoid detection and arrest as long as he could. He felt confident that with diligent application to his line, he would, after a year's work at most, save enough of the other fellows' money to allow his retirement. He resolved to bank his proceeds as fast as he procured them and figured that by fast work he would amass a few hundred thousand dollars and through some wise investment be enabled to live on its interest for the rest of his life. During his career of crime he probably collected double that amount in small sums, yet when he stood before the

tailor to be fitted for his bars and stripes, he was practically broke.

Barry planned his periodical campaigns well in advance and worked only one day weekly, this being Saturday. His victims were generally Main Street merchants and his territory included the entire country, from coast to coast, with an occasional dash into some Canadian city. He passed forged certified checks only, receiving in return merchandise and an adequate amount of change in cash, and passed as many as fifty checks in as many stores on each working day. Saturday night would find him on a train, traveling far from the scene of his day's activity, bound for new fertile territory and fresh victims.

His method was simple, yet it entailed many details in preparation. When a cannon mob returned to its base, the members generally were provided with a myriad of portfolios, leather pokes, card cases and pocket purses of all descriptions. Some were monogrammed with the owner's initials and the majority contained cards of identification, various letters of importance to the owner, automobile licenses, membership cards in all kinds of clubs and lodges, etc. Invariably there would be some sort of script bearing a facsimile of the owner's signature.

These articles were of no value whatever to the new

owners, who merely sought the cash they contained, and the presence of such items on their person, in the event of arrest, might provide rather entangling complications. But to Barry they loomed up as vital necessities for his new racket.

Soon he possessed an assortment of such trinkets, all catalogued and carefully filed under the name of the town from which their original owner hailed. These were marked for use as identification in the passage of checks bearing the forged names of the respective owners.

Before leaving his headquarters, Barry would post a number of letters, registering some of them, addressed to the names of those he proposed to impersonate in the town to be visited. He would select a half dozen hotels in each town and to each one would go a batch of mail directed to the name he intended registering under. During the week he would depart for the town, armed with some fifty different checks, all made out to his various aliases, and all bearing forged certifications.

Arriving in town he would register at one hotel as—for instance—John Smith and inquire for his mail, declaring he expected some on arrival. The several letters addressed by himself to John Smith would be presented, after which Barry would saunter over to

another hotel and repeat the procedure using the name of James Brown. Having visited and registered at a half dozen hostelries, he was now established under as many names. His next move was to locate the spots for the killing and acquaint himself with the line of merchandise to be purchased.

Saturday noon would find him keyed up for action with every loophole covered and with his safe and hurried exit from the city all arranged. At each hotel he had his documents handy, so that he could quickly drop the impersonation of John Smith and assume the rôle of James Brown without delay. As Smith of Newark, N. J., he would casually saunter into a jewelry store and ask to be shown a platinum watch. Affable of manner and apparently easy to please, a purchase was soon decided upon and then he would suddenly discover that he was a bit short of the required amount in cash. Exhibiting the certified check, made out in Smith's name, Barry would then begin his well rehearsed spiel, bringing forth the Smith wallet or card case containing membership cards in various Newark clubs. To make matters more convincing for the merchant, Barry generally extracted the check from a letter written on the purloined stationery of some prominent Newark firm, this being among those previously

mailed to the hotel at which he registered under Smith's name.

If the merchant hesitated after examining the documentary proof of his patron's identity, Barry would promptly suggest that he phone his hotel to certify the matter, of course having explained to the hotel clerk before leaving that such a call might be expected. If the merchant went to this extreme,—and he seldom did—he generally was convinced of the genuineness of the check and readily agreed to cash it to oblige his new customer.

The check always called for an odd amount and Barry's purchase usually allowed for less than a hundred dollars' difference, which he received in cash, along with the article he bought.

The same operation was repeated at the next stop, probably a block away. As Smith of Newark, Barry would unload ten or a dozen checks, after which he would hasten to the hotel where he was known as Brown and pick up that individual's credentials. With the two sets of documents, he would immediately visit the third hotel, where he might be known as Doakes, leaving the Smith articles in his room there.

Then, selecting another portion of town, he would visit a dozen other shops, posing as Brown of Sandusky, Ohio, and always utilizing the same monologue,

gather up a dozen small articles, receiving the various sums in cash at each stop.

With the town worked to its limit, Barry would then wrap his purchases in a neat package, enclose them in a suit case or box, and ship them by express to New York, to be called for at that end, mailing the receipt to himself at a rendezvous where he received all personal mail. Upon his return to the city he would retrieve the packages, engaging a messenger to call at the express office for them. In this manner he avoided detection or the possibility of identification in the event a tracer accompanied the goods to their destination.

Sheer nerve prevented his apprehension on more than one occasion where he had been preceded by other sheet passers, working along different lines. In Baltimore he was interrupted in the midst of a purchase of jewelry when a brother of the owner entered and denounced Barry as a thief. The door was quickly locked to prevent his escape and the police notified. Pending the arrival of the detectives, Barry indignantly denied the accusation, and without a trace of emotion suggested his captors might be courteous enough to offer him a chair.

The arrival of the officers was followed by a complete explanation of Barry's actions and his admis-

sion that everything was true as related. He repeated his declaration of innocence and readily submitted to a search of his person. A perusal of his effects disclosed membership cards in a Rotary Club, an automobile license, a few personal letters and a number of visiting cards, all in the name of the person he had represented himself as being. There followed a whispered conference between the store owner, his brother and the two officers, after which they decided not to make an arrest.

But Barry feigned indignation, demanding that he be arrested and loudly threatening civil action immediately upon his inevitable vindication. But the police officers, with no duty to perform, decided to drop from the picture and left the trio to argue it out between themselves. Apologies followed in rapid succession with the jeweler finally insisting that he be given the honor of accepting the check, which Barry with well-staged reluctance permitted. The three then moved to a nearby bar to drink to each other's health, after which Barry made a hurried exit from town, the narrowly averted calamity coming just as he had about exhausted his supply of checks.

Another incident in Barry's checkered career, which carried a touch of humor, occurred while he was working a number of Broadway shops. He entered a prom-

inent men's clothes shop in the neighborhood of Herald Square and ordered two suits of clothes and a winter overcoat. He paid a small deposit in cash and advised the salesman he would call for the altered garments the following Saturday.

On the day appointed Barry arrived and proceeded through the usual motions of accepting the goods and proffering the certified check in payment, offering the accompanying credentials of identification. The credit manager of the store was called on the scene, he being an elderly gentleman credited with knowing every angle of the many various check rackets. He looked Barry over, examined the check and was then handed the accompanying card case for inspection.

"Well, I'll be damned," cried he in apparent joy, "come inside to my office; I certainly am glad to see you, son," leading the way to a private room in the rear of the store.

Barry for a moment considered the chances of a safe exit, but a glance up and down the aisles assured him this was impossible, so he followed the credit manager to his private office. Once behind the closed door the old gent exhibited a bottle of private stock and throwing his arms around Barry's shoulders, assured him he could have anything in the store.

Continuing the conversation, he began inquiring of

Barry the condition of his father's health, explaining that he remembered the day Barry was born, alluding of course to the chap Barry was impersonating and whose credentials he carried. Barry soon resumed his natural poise, advised the credit man his father's health was waning, especially since he suffered a stroke a few months back, and concluded the talk by inviting the old boy to the house for dinner, even promising to call for him one day the following week in his new car.

Taking advantage of his turn in luck Barry managed to have the credit man cash another personal check, without the bank certification, calling for several hundred dollars, and even succeeded in getting a small reduction in the cost of his purchase.

Barry continued dropping maps around the country for several years. The wails that followed his departure from a town echoed loud and long, sending countless detectives on long wild chases and resulting in many false arrests. Barry left no trail behind him, but the men he impersonated were easily located, and of course could in every instance prove a satisfactory alibi. But as the complaints rolled up, Barry faced a double charge on every score, for in addition to the charge of passing a worthless check, he was credited

with the theft of the credentials, or, if not the theft, with the charge of receiving stolen goods.

Eventually the law overtook Barry. With the racketeer's usual lack of foresight he took unto himself a partner. This chap, without consulting Barry, decided to do a little work on his own account. In Boston he visited a store that had previously been worked by Barry and before he could get a flying start he was surrounded by a dozen minions of law and order.

While a trifle obstinate at first, the boys massaged him with rubber hose and blackjacks until his memory returned, and when the stenographer affixed the final period to his conversation, the police thought they had the solution of every crime on record since the famous slaying of Abel by his brother Cain.

Acting on information supplied by the prisoner, the New York detectives closed in on Barry in his Bronx apartment and soon had sufficient evidence against him to insure his retention as a state boarder for many years to come. His former ally turned state's evidence to insure a light sentence for himself, and prominent among the complaining witnesses were the Baltimore jeweler and the Broadway credit man. The late Judge Malone, in General Sessions Court, sentenced Barry to a term of ten years in Sing Sing Prison. During his

sojourn in that institution, he managed to call off all complaints existing in other states by making partial restitution with what funds he had saved, thus preventing the execution of countless warrants that were waiting for the day of his release, and which would result in his imprisonment for the rest of his natural life.

CHAPTER III

SELLING STIFFS

"KEEP your racket clear of the U. S. Mails."

That warning continually rings in the ears of the racketeer, and when a proposition necessitates the use of the mails he generally takes a sharp detour. The smart hustler always figures he has a fifty-fifty chance to beat the state courts, regardless of the evidence against him, but the record book shows that once Uncle Samuel puts his finger on a racket, some one invariably retires from the field to take a ride South to Atlanta or West to Leavenworth. The racketeer knows he has two strikes on him every time he goes to bat in a Federal Court, for the Postal Inspector generally does his work well before making a collar. Consequently the sharpshooter who gambles with the Postal authorities generally carries sawdust where the gray matter should be stored and sooner or later is given a chance to square himself with the government by helping manufacture nice new mail bags in the jute mill of a Federal stir.

But interstate communication doesn't necessarily de-

pend on the mails, and where the racketeer must reach out into the wide open spaces for his man he simply uses the Express Companies, the Long Distance Telephone or the Telegraph wires. This method of procedure leaves your Uncle Samuel holding the bag.

In rackets where a scheme is worked that would ordinarily call for use of the mails, but where the telegraph wires are utilized instead, the racketeer must be careful not to accept returns sent him under a U. S. stamp. Many widely advertised schemes call for answers by wire, but occasionally the applicant forwards his order by mail. The acceptance of such an order would bring the racketeer within the jurisdiction of the Federal Laws, and communications received in this way are promptly returned unopened and unanswered. But the operator is occasionally caught napping and those are the cases you read about in your morning paper now and then.

Many years ago, before the Postal Laws were tightened up, one of the big city wise boys advertised throughout the country that he would forward a steel engraving of George Washington to any one sending him one dollar in cash or stamps. The replies flooded the mails and to each one he sent in return a two-cent stamp with the picture of the first President engraved

on its face. He could hardly be charged with fraudulent advertising, for he had not specified the size or nature of the steel engraving in his advertising copy, although the latter was framed in such a clever way that any reader would visualize a beautiful job, worthy of a conspicuous space on the wall of the home or business office.

Another racket that earned a fortune for a smart New Yorker some years ago entailed the use of the express firms in delivering his product. This scheme was devised about the time the Swastika symbol was becoming commercially popular in the country. Swastika is an ornament in the form of a Greek cross with the ends of the arms bent at right angles. It is thought to be a sign of good luck and at this period it was considered fashionable to wear a Swastika as a watch fob or tie pin.

This particular racketeer had thousands of the little charms made up of cheap metal and he placed advertisements in dozens of small town papers extolling the marvelous powers of the symbol. He offered them for sale at $1.50 to be sent by express C.O.D., but received few orders. He did, however, receive a copy of each paper in which he placed an advertisement and his place of business was soon cluttered up with these

sheets, periodicals, farm papers and weekly gossip almanacs of the interior sections.

One day, while glancing through the obituary column of a small town paper, the name and address of a young lad who had been suddenly killed in an accident embedded itself in his memory and he absent-mindedly dispatched one of the Swastika symbols by express to this individual. Later in looking over his shipping list he realized the error and shortly after discharged the thought entirely from his mind. A few days later his eyes popped out when he received $1.50 from the express company for the delivery of the symbol to the address of the dead youth.

The next train headed for the town carried the racketeer in a passenger coach. His brain was jumping up and down with new ideas, but he wanted to locate the joker if one existed. Arriving at the hamlet he went directly to the house of mourning and, after introducing himself, explained that the symbol was forwarded by mistake, adding that he had just finished reading of the youth's death and was so affected he shipped the Swastika without fully realizing the action, and that immediately upon receipt of the money he hastened to the scene to return the same with his sincere apologies.

All of which was true—to a degree, but the racketeer

had other reasons for the journey. He received a cordial welcome, was made to feel right at home and met all the folks. It developed that the boy's father had received the Swastika, delivered C.O.D. by the expressman, and had naturally paid the amount requested before opening the package. Upon seeing the contents, the little metal charm, accompanied by a pamphlet explaining that it brought good luck to the wearer, the parent had concluded that this was something the lad had ordered before his death and it was therefore treasured by the father as a memento. In fact, it seems the lad's mother, who was a bit superstitious, had remarked that if it had arrived a day or two earlier it might have been the means of preventing the fatal accident.

The next day found the racketeer poring over the obituary notices in every paper at hand. To every man and woman whose death was reported, a Swastika was shipped express C.O.D. but care was taken that only one or two went to the same town. He purchased small town papers everywhere as well as those of the larger cities and soon his business was thriving. He stocked up with a new and bigger supply of charms, and seldom was a return made. But his success inspired others to invade the field and soon the authorities began investigating his racket. Before the

teeth of the law clicked, however, he padlocked his shop and vamoosed to parts unknown.

His imitators however were neither as clever nor as fortunate. They concluded the charm racket was killed and began shipping small Bibles to the dead. Others enclosed cheap fountain pens in the C.O.D. packages, but when a pen was received by the family of a man, who during life, could neither read nor write, they notified the prosecuting authorities and the resultant publicity scattered the mob and sealed—for the time being at least—the doom of the Stiff Order racket.

CHAPTER IV

THE GLIM DROPPER

A FEW years after the World War had faded into history, there appeared upon the corners of Broadway a young man whose aged appearance belied his years. Tall, rather good looking and with the carriage of a military officer, his general aspect suggested relationship to John Law, and for this very reason he was studiously avoided by those boys of the street grinding out an income with their wits.

While conversing he would occasionally drop an H here and there, giving the slightest evidence of an English accent, but to the smart observer this effort was obviously a forced one and only further served to arouse the suspicions of the regulars. On his upper lip there rested one of those puny mustaches that could have been easily eradicated with one stroke of a dull safety razor. The ends of this facial ornament were always carefully waxed and drawn to a fine point, and for a very good reason. At first glance one's attention was automatically called to this portion of his face, just as he planned, for where his left eye should

be there was a glass substitute. Few noticed this, however, unless called to their attention, for the ringer was an exact duplicate of the missing member, a marvelous tribute to the skill of the manufacturer.

His periodical appearances around the haunts of the racketeers fired their curiosity to the burning point. To those bold enough to ask, he gave his name as Ted Curtis, but retreated back into a shell of evasiveness if his questioner persisted in digging deeper into his personal history. To Broadway a name means nothing. Eventually he was referred to as "The bird with the trick glimmer" and finally this was abbreviated to "The Glim."

He was thus christened in the language of the racketeer and has been recognized by that monicker ever since.

In the so-called underworld, when an alien without invitation invades the territory where the mobs congregate he is known as "A weed in the garden." Until proved otherwise he is given the chill. Cold stares are aimed at him, his every move is openly watched and he is generally made to feel so uncomfortably out of place that he soon disappears for warmer and more friendly spots.

"The Glim" was a bit different, however. He reacted from the conventional treatment as though he

had been reared in an ice plant. Finding him immune to the usual veiled insults, the boys decided to put a tracer on his past. Accordingly he was thoroughly and capably "investigated." It developed that his right name was Theodore Curtis, that he hailed from a small town in New England and had seen service overseas with a Canadian regiment. Also that he had been wounded in action and had suffered the loss of an eye in a French hospital. This much was gleaned by a perusal of the contents of his trunks, the "investigator" locating there, among other things, his army discharge. This portion of the "investigation" was made possible when one of the boys managed to obtain accommodations in the same house, a private dwelling in the Park Avenue section converted by the owner into a furnished-room house.

But also in the trunk the "investigator" discovered several trays of artificial eyes, resembling the one worn by The Glim but of crude workmanship. Soon thereafter The Glim's racket was solved and he was welcomed into the inner circles of Racketville.

It was The Glim's habit to vacate his Broadway haunts for weekly tours of the Hinterland. Arriving in an outside city, he would meet his associate. The latter always attended to the preliminary details of the racket which consisted mainly of establishing him-

self as a neighborhood resident with a number of merchants in the town to be worked. His title in the language of The Glim was "The Finder." He would locate in Newark, for instance, and for three or four days visit the various shops, making small purchases, generally appearing minus coat and hat in order to plant the impression that he resided a few doors away. He was a gabby chap and made many acquaintances.

The Glim would appear on the scene when the field was prepared for harvesting, dressed in the height of fashion, carrying a cane or swagger stick and chirping an English dialect as thick as a London fog. With the list of what he termed "drop joints" tucked in his pocket he would saunter forth for his scene in the comedy. Entering a shop he would bargain over a small purchase. Before the goods were accepted he would suddenly emit a sharp cry and declare "Dammit, I've dropped me H'eye."

Down on his knees he would make a hurried search of the floor, meanwhile explaining that his artificial eye had dropped from its socket, showing the empty hole to the astounded audience, who, of course, proceeded to aid in the search. Then The Glim would advise the store owner that this particular eye had cost him two thousand pounds and couldn't be duplicated anywhere in America. Consulting his wrist

watch he suddenly remembered an appointment with his barristers and, without completing the original purchase, prepared to hasten away.

But before leaving he would extract a personal card from his wallet, one a trifle larger than the average business card, on which the name he employed in his racket was engraved, accompanied by the initials of a few phoney titles. Handing this to the sympathetic shopkeeper, he would then promise him $500 in cash if he found and returned the lost eye, giving as his address the name of the best hotel in town.

A few hours after his departure the accomplice would saunter in, select some article in stock and as the clerk prepared to wrap it for delivery, his eyes would dart floorward and with a cry of "What's this," he would stoop and come up with one of the artificial eyes clutched between his thumb and forefinger.

In a moment every one in the shop was aware of the discovery and the shop owner would promptly claim it as the property of one of his customers. But The Finder would not give it up. He would turn it over and over, estimating its value at the least to be $500 and declare he would probably watch the Lost and Found columns of the daily papers to locate the owner and collect his earned reward. The shopkeeper, seeing $500 fading into the distance, would, as a rule,

immediately inject some business into the conversation. Time being valuable, The Finder would then agree to part with the prize for $100 in cash, making it unmistakably clear that he wouldn't take a penny less.

Following the perfect impression scored by The Glim on his visit, few business men would pass up an opportunity to realize a profit of four hundred per cent on a gamble of $100 and The Finder generally left with exactly that amount of the sucker's cash. And he lost little time in leaving that particular neighborhood behind him, for his route was necessarily a large one and the size of the day's score depended upon the speed of his activities.

The shop owner, calling at the hotel, would learn that his customer was out and not expected back until late that evening. Needless to say The Glim never returned to that hotel, but late that evening the casual observer would notice from thirty to fifty anxious shopkeepers, sitting around the lobby, all watching the door for the appearance of an English gentleman, who walked with a military step and had an empty socket where his left eye should be.

And each of these nervous individuals clutched in his hand a piece of glass, shaped like a human eye, that was made to order for The Glim at an outside cost of $15 a gross.

CHAPTER V

GREEN GOODS

I MET him by appointment in the Jersey City Terminal of the Central Railroad of New Jersey. He had just been released from the Federal Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kan., and had stopped at Easton, Pa., on his way East to look up some old cronies. He had served out his full term of twenty years flat, his good behavior credits being taken up for some minor infractions of the prison rules. The official record read —"For manufacturing and circulating counterfeit currency of the U. S. of A."

A mutual friend had arranged that I act as a reception committee of one to greet him on his return to Broadway. He was on the high seas, business bound for Europe, and I gladly agreed to deputize in his absence. Our meeting had been arranged by correspondence, and while we had never seen each other before, I experienced no difficulty in picking him out of the crowd that milled through the station. And he seemed to sense that I was the man he was looking for.

He lagged along, midway in the throng, and while

the terminal was well filled with people waiting for incoming friends, he seemed to spot me the minute he pushed through the swinging doors, for he walked straight to the spot where I stood, and offering me his outstretched hand, exclaimed, "Hello, Kid!"

He was one of those oldish-young men whose age could be reasonably placed anywhere between forty and sixty. His hair was gray, the kind of gray that seems to be struggling against turning pure white. His face was pasty, like that of a corpse. The flesh was waxy and lifeless as though all the blood had been sucked from its veins. His skin was taut as if pulled tightly to fit snug to the bones. He had a slight evidence of a forward droop to his shoulders, the left one leaning toward the ground as he walked, suggesting that he had carried heavy loads on that side. And when he passed through the building toward the ferry slip, he lifted his feet several inches from the ground at each step, not merely shuffling along as did the rest of the crowd.

His lips scarcely moved as he spoke and his conversation was confined mostly to monosyllables. The sentences rolled out through the corner of his mouth and when he spoke he curled his lower lip the merest trifle, a sort of semi-pucker as though the other side of his mouth were paralyzed. Through the small aperture

thus formed he conversed, and as he talked blue veins became visible around his temples. He walked along at my right side onto the boat and when a fellow passenger crowded me on that side, as we leaned over the rail, he requested me to move up a bit so that he could squeeze into the same position. And twice during the night I noticed him switching positions as we walked, so that he would be on my right. For twenty years, from cell to mess hall; from mess hall to workshop; from workshop to cell, always on the right side of the double column. He couldn't change.

When the ferry whistle tooted its warning, he instinctively became rigid, but only for an instant. And as he relaxed, his eyes swept the whole front of the boat, although his head never moved so much as a fraction of an inch. He apparently wondered if any one shared the secret of his embarrassment.

He wasn't the cowering, cringy type, for he had nothing to fear. His actions were not impelled by a sense of danger. But twenty years under restraint had filed his nerves to a sensitive point. Twenty monotonous years in prison, where the faintest sound had a specific meaning. And now, away from it all, every little noise with which he had become familiar in stir gave him the jumps. He didn't seem to mind the clamor of the city; the ease and freedom of his

new life didn't faze him a bit, but that whistle toot must have had a sinister meaning back in the world from which he just came.

As he faced the weak glow of the single light that hung from the roof of the men's cabin over the outer deck, the brim of his soft hat threw a shadow across his projecting cheek bones. His eyes were like two powerful spotlights, a sort of greenish blue. Deep set in that pallid face, they shone clear, as though every battery in his body was supplying them with power. They were strong eyes, the type that calls for respect rather than admiration. Burning twenty years under resentment, hatred, understanding and appreciation in turn, they seemed to control his every action. Rather than the windows of his soul, they were watchdogs of his life.

It was late evening and I readily acquiesced to his suggestion that we walk up Broadway. He wanted to see the old street again. He had heard of the changes it had undergone during the years of his confinement, the new arrivals at the Pen bringing him vivid word pictures of its growth and expansion. As we walked across town from the Ferry Building he plied me with question after question. His inquiry for "Cub," who had arranged our meeting, reminded me of an envelope I carried in my pocket to be delivered to him. It con-

tained good U. S. currency, not the kind that had sent him to a living Limbo for a twenty-year stretch. And it seemed to give him new life, for as he counted the crisp yellow bank notes a broad smile decorated his face, and he quickened his stride as though anxious to get some place to test their value.

As we rounded into Broadway he looked across the park and noted the spot that once housed Madison Square Garden. He had heard of the new sportdrome built uptown by Tex Rickard and evinced a desire to see it. "There's the old spot where the wind used to blow the skirts high," he mused, pointing to the base of the Flatiron Building.

We walked slowly up Broadway, that section between Twenty-third and Thirtieth streets bringing back pleasant and painful memories to the old timer. It was not lit up like it used to be, according to him, but ahead to the North the wiggling mazdas sent out their merry messages in a blazing glow, and he remarked that the works had moved uptown a bit.

As we crossed Twenty-eighth Street he spied the Everard Baths sign in the same position it had hung for years. "Many's the good night's flop I had in that joint," he said, "and many a matinée I took in at that place," pointing to Proctor's Theatre on the corner. He recognized the Breslin and Martinique hotels and

tried in vain to locate a saloon midway in one of the blocks where he said they used to keep the beer kegs, with shiny brass hoops, right up on the bar. It had disappeared.

"Let's mosey up to the Herald Building," he murmured. "I'd like to see those big iron men bang that big bell again, and take a look at those Herald presses."

We walked ahead. He noted Gimbel's as a new addition to the block and searched his memory to recall the individual street stores the big building had replaced. We came to the former Herald Building and he was disappointed to find the big men and the big bell removed from the roof. He also missed a lunch wagon that once leaned against the curb at the little park facing the former home of the newspaper. He spoke of the bulletin board that once adorned the Broadway side of the building and mentioned how the sidewalk bookmakers would consult the bulletins hung there for scratches and results of the various races. He remembered a giant electric sign that stood atop a nearby building. It depicted a chariot race and advertised some national product. Of all the signs on the Great White Way, he declared this one, and another advertising Heatherbloom Skirts, that flashed nightly above the Hotel Metropole, never left his memory. He could see them bobbing before his eyes as he lay

nightly on his prison cot and permitted his memory to carry him back to the big street.

We moved ahead toward Forty-second Street. The Normandie and Marlboro hotels were now office buildings. He started to tell me of a deal he once put over in the lobby of the latter hostelry, but something caused him to change the subject. The talk switched to actors and actresses. He had seen Montgomery and Stone in "The Wizard of Oz." Among others he mentioned Lotta Faust, Pete Dailey, Ross and Fenton, Eva Tanguay, Lottie Gilson, Mabel Hite, DeWolf Hopper, Amelia Bingham and scores of lesser lights. He had often gone to Pastor's and never missed a Monday matinée at Hammerstein's in the old days.

On the block below the Metropolitan Opera House he noted the same old one-story shacks that stood there before he was taken away. We reached the Brokaw Building. He studied every square foot of this section minutely.

"Here stood the Rossmore Hotel, Kid," said he, pointing to Brokaw's. "I remember once they had two fires there in one day. And right here was the Metropole, the sporting headquarters of America. I knew them all. It was run by George Considine. He had three brothers, Johnny, Jimmy and Billy. What a spot that was! You could find the class of the world

right in there every day and night. And now look at it!"

We crossed the famous arterial street of the big city. He pointed toward Seventh Avenue and recalled that a famous saloon once occupied the corner, a saloon with a horseshoe bar that was always popularly lined with the thirsty, and where great food was served in booths. He looked vainly for a German restaurant that once stood just East of Broadway, and at the same time saw that Shanley's place was no longer on that block. "Yes," he said absent-mindedly, "it's a brand new town, but I get a great kick out of looking at the changes."

We walked up on the East side of Broadway. He pointed over to the South-west corner of Forty-third Street and shook his head sadly. "That was Dowling's corner, the greatest beer joint in the world, Kid, and right here was the Cadillac Bar, always crowded. What a change, boy, what a change!"

The Paramount Building held his gaze for a full minute. He seemed to forget the spot, but easily remembered it when I mentioned Shanley's Restaurant. He had eaten there on more than one occasion. He spoke of a round table back of the door where Bat Masterson and the Lewis brothers, Irving and Bill, used to take lunch. And he expressed surprise that

retail shops had been built into the street-level space of the Hotel Astor.

We passed the Claridge. In block center he pointed to an entry, reminding me that this was formerly Rector's Bar. The police tower caught his attention. He seemed bewildered by the maze of traffic. It was still early and the theater jam had not arrived.

The walk was tiring him apparently, for he suggested we find a spot to sit down. I mentioned several places, but he passed them all up. He wanted to find some place that would bring back memories of his days of freedom. He inquired of Frank Garrity; he asked if Jimmy Thompson's Garden Restaurant was still going on Fiftieth street. He mentioned Johnny Martin's, John O'Malley's, Danny Clancy's and the Irishman's place next door to where the Palace Theatre stood. All gone with the entry of prohibition. As we reached Forty-seventh street, he saw a buffet lunch room on the corner where his tailor had once held forth.

And then I mentioned Billy Gallagher's. A smile came to his eyes as he murmured, "Lead me there. How could I have forgotten Billy, the whitest guy who ever stuck his monicker on a liquor license?"

We walked up to the Broadway Gardens in the center of the next block. Billy hadn't arrived yet. We sat at a table and ordered some refreshments. No one

there knew him. He wondered if any of the old gang would be around. He mentioned names. Eddie Guerrin and Chicago May; Spud Ryan and others. He mentioned a nigger hackie that used to drive him home almost every night. He had been an ardent baseball fan. He spoke of sports writers such as Sam Crane and W. W. Naughton. And critics came to his mind also. Alan Dale and Acton Davies were his favorites.

A tabloid newspaper carried headlines of a funny swindle. It monopolized his attention. Some immigrant had parted with his life's savings for a machine that would make money. And then he became loquacious on rackets in general and his racket in particular.

"That thing belongs in the funny papers, along with the Yellow Kid and Buster Brown," said he, pointing to the illustration showing the machine. "Imagine any one giving real dough for such a thing. How could any sucker believe that he could stick a roll of toilet paper in one end of that gadget, and have ten-dollar bills drop outa the other end?

"The fellow who worked that scheme actually walked into jail. Can you imagine him even having the nerve to call himself a queer shover? In the first place he must be a grease ball or he wouldn't make his play for immigrants. The most he could get is a few

hundred bucks, and on a fall he'd bump into the same bit they gave me.

"The job they settled me for took time, brains and money. Four of us worked nearly a month to land our fish and we'd have got away clean if it wasn't for that dirty, lousy, double-crossin' rat that squealed on the mob. And all to save him from doin' a ten-day bit on the Island too.

"Kid, we had a racket, as they call it nowadays. It was a peach. Without the plates, they couldn't pin a thing on us. And that white livered louse led the Pinks right to the plant over in Jersey. We had them buried under a fence on a farm, for we only used them to convince the suckers. And that rat gets pinched in a notch joint raid and thinks the flatties have got him cold. Without even bein' asked to, he spits up his guts and spills the works. I'd do my twenty all over again, just to have him in my hands. But they beat me to it. He was creased with a shiv down in a Southern stir.

"I'll never forget that last job. The Dutchman and I landed the sucker in a gambling house on Forty-fourth Street. He was tossin' his dough away against the wheel. It looked like he knew how it was made too. We tailed him from the joint to his home. He lived over on the East Side. For a week we watched him.

He was a woolen manufacturer downtown, a young lad who had just inherited the business from his father.

"That kid was a gambling fool. He played the races, bet on the games and every night went for the wheel. We tried forty ways to get a regular knock-down to him but couldn't make connections. Finally I horned in on an argument he was having about the ball game and took his side. From then on I worked fast.

"One morning as he left the wheel joint I accidentally bumped into him on the sidewalk. One word led to another and we wound up taking a spin through the park in one o' those sea-goin' hacks. He opened up durin' the ride. Told me he was goin' too fast and I yessed him to a fare-you-well. We finally got back to Broadway and I suggested an eye-opener. We went into an all-night joint and I called for some grape. When the waiter came around I shoved a twenty-case note on the table. I insisted on payin' for the second bottle, giving the waiter another twenty.

"The kid reminded me that I had some change, but I told him I needed it. I paid for the third bottle with another double saw-buck too, and then we hit the air. I made a date for the next evening, promising to show him a system to beat the roulette game. When he showed up, I handed him $500 in twenties and told him to buy me that many chips.

"We played awhile and somehow or other he quit winner. I suggested a walk, gave him a wink to follow me and we went out. I took him to a little place over on Sixth Avenue where the beer was good. And there I put in the works. I told him the money he handled was phoney and showed him a pocket full of it. He seemed a little leary at first, but when he saw the bartender take it without the second look, his nerve came back. We went to a swell place to eat and I had him pay the bill with another twenty.

"We rambled around half the night, dropping twenties every place we visited. The kid seemed to get a kick out of watchin' a waiter finger the dough. One bohunk took a second look at a bill and the kid's eyes nearly popped out of his head. ' 'At's all right, ain't it?' he said, and when the waiter said 'I wished I had a barrel of 'em,' the kid grinned all over.

"The next day I met him early. He wanted to see me put some of them through a bank. We went into six or seven banks, finally goin' to the one he kept his dough in. Here he handed in ten of them and got two century notes in change.

"Then I hopped right to the job. Told him I was goin' to meet the guy that made them that night. Fixed it for him to be with me. And when I met the Dutchman, he raised hell about me bringin' a stranger with

me. I salved things over, but the Dutchman nearly crabbed the works with his yellin'. He overdid it and the kid wanted to lam, thinkin' he was doin' me harm by stickin' around.

"The Dutchman told us he had to make a big sale quick as he was goin' West. He said he was goin' to make up as many as he could, but only wanted to print what could be sold, as he didn't want to carry any of the queer West with him. If he was caught with the plates he could make the grade, but with the dough also, it would break bad for him. That was a damn fool argument, but the Dutchman wanted to cinch the sale quick and I guess he said anything he thought of.

"I told the Dutchman I'd meet him the followin' night and let him know how much I wanted. And then I warmed the kid up for the take. The Dutchman took the phoney plates out of a chamois bag and showed them to the kid. They were a good-lookin' job on copper, but of course they was full of flaws. The kid was a little nervous and seemed glad when I suggested we skidoo. And that night the kid and I flopped together in the Turkish baths.

"He figured out his cash and decided he could go for about $100,000 worth of the queer. But the next day he could only scrape together $94,000 and that seemed

about the limit of his credit, for he borrowed from a few friends to make that pile.

"We met the Dutchman and gave him the order. I was to take $106,000 and the kid the balance of a two hundred grand bundle. The Dutchman told us he'd have it for us the followin' Friday. That was Tuesday. Friday comes and there we are, me and the kid with the dough all ready to make the buy. The Dutchman had put on a prop argument on terms, but I talked him into givin' us three for one. That meant we was to get more than a half million bucks. Of course the argument was part o' the game and the kid gave me credit for bein' a good business man.

"When we met the Dutchman, he had the stuff all packed up in bundles. When the kid saw me hand over what looked like the real McCoy, with a grand note on the outside, he never hesitated a minute about givin' the Dutchman his roll. He started to count it, but the Dutchman grabbed it and asked him if he was crazy, tryin' to get us all in the jug.

"I told the kid to take the bundles and grab a hack for home. I told him I'd tail him in another and warned him not to rubber around or do anything to tip his mit. We had a suitcase with us and we dumped the bundles into that, but first I tore the corner off one that was marked and yanked out the good twenty-case note that

was where it should be, right on top of a package. The bad ones went to the bottom of the keyster.

"The Dutchman blew and I watched the kid get into a cab. I got into one right behind him, but I hopped out at the corner and met the Dutchman on the next block. And then we went down to the house to wait for Curly and that lousy rat that had us collared. They had a sucker on the hook for a lousy three grand touch, but they were in on our play too. We always shot square with one another.

"It got around midnight and I couldn't understand what was keepin' them. The Dutchman was nervous, for he liked to put the rails behind him after a big job. I fell asleep, I guess, and when I woke up there was the cops. One had his rod up against my belly and the other one was puttin' the bracelets on my dukes. The Dutchman was on the floor groanin' like hell. One o' them had kicked him in the guts.

"They took us downtown and gave us both an awful kickin' around. But the Dutchman stood pat and I took all they gave me without a squeak. Finally they brought in that lousy rat and Curly. Curly's face looked like an elephant stepped on it. He wouldn't talk either, but the louse stood off and put the finger on the three of us.

"They had the plates and everything else in

court. They mugged us that night and the next day the papers was full o' the story. The kid saw my pan and broke a time record gettin' downtown to identify us. He got his dough back and I guess he was satisfied, for he didn't show up at the trial.

"I tried to fight the rap, but they had us dead to rights. I got twenty flat and the Dutchman and Curly took the same dose. Curly died in Atlanta with the con and the Dutchman pulled some kind of a wire to get on the street after he did a little more than ten years."

The waiter wiped off the table and told us that Billy was in now. But before the old timer got up I asked him about the twenties he kept passing around. I couldn't understand why the kid should squeal if he had a suitcase full of negotiable bank notes.

"Those twenties were as good as gold, kid," said he. "But the kid carted home a suitcase full of cut paper. The plates were lousy imitations and we only carried them to show to suckers. I never passed a counterfeit bill in my life."

CHAPTER VI

BROADWAY ANGELS

WHAT a marvelous magnet for sucker money,—the stage!

What a truly wonderful collection of rackets are framed around that liveliest of all professions,—the show business!

Inside, outside, on the side, the theater runs neck and neck with the race track in projecting angles by which the smart racketeer can separate the unsophisticated sap from his surplus sugar. The industrious hustler can always accommodate the ambitious investing angel with anything his particular yen calls for. If he craves ownership of a production, the stage sharpshooter merely dusts the cobwebs from a moldy, long forgotten manuscript, dopes out the overhead for production requirements and his boy friend becomes a producing manager instantaneously. And many a turkey road show has gone to the bone yard with a balance in the red that would, if really and properly invested, launch a rather pretentious production for the house of Ziegfeld.

If the chump craves a stage career, the professional

sharpshooter has sundry methods of detouring the principal up and down costly routes until he is so financially exhausted, before even sighting the terminal, that he throws up the sponge, wishing he had chosen a course in entomology instead. Doting mothers with dopey daughters have put the pork chops on many a racketeer's breakfast table and probably will as long as the old man back home is soft enough to decorate the dotted line in the lower right hand corner of a certified check.

Back in the days of long skirts, a good-looking frail could crash the chorus line on her way to fame merely by skipping a few of the ten commandments. The stage was smeared with a shady reputation in that era and the girls came to work for wages and not for the incidental opportunities a program-line offered. The chorine took her $18 a week and camped in a furnished-room house. Now they get from $35 upward and commute to Broadway from their country estates in Rolls Royces.

Give two career chasers with the same allotment of stage ability an even break at the barrier of show business. One may be a dazzling, golden-haired creature with oodles of "It" and all that goes with "It," but whose purse carries nothing but a yawning cavity; the other a drug-store blonde who has absolutely nothing

to alibi her presence but a good bank balance. The last mentioned dame will be coming out of the executive's door while the other is still trying to find her way around the waiting room. Just a new slant on values, that's all! Nowadays an ounce of cold cash overbalances a ton of sex appeal. Maybe the World War did it; who cares?

Stage rackets, if properly reviewed, would require a volume for themselves alone. In every branch of the profession one finds countless chiselers, all pecking away at the outer rim of a racket. Some have reached the inner circle on a rain check, but if they are ever submitted to a theatrical intelligence test, they'll bounce right back into the oblivion in which they belong. Schools in which amateurs are taught the various points of acting are perhaps the rawest of the racket species. This, of course, doesn't go for the legitimate institutions. But the big cities support a flock of phoney kindergartens that are nothing short of nickel snatchers. Now and then an exposé turns up one or two and investigations, starting with a blast and ending with a bubble, occasionally bring them to light, but as a rule they go along, grabbing a sucker here and there, promising much, but producing little.

The greatest of all racketeers in this division proved to be an ex-vaudevillian, Arthur Buckner, a former

trick cyclist. Back in the days when big time vaudeville was a reality, and not merely a page in theatrical history, Buckner was rated one of the best trick bike riders on the stage. In fact he was one of the two outstanding celebrities in that class, the other being Ralph Johnstone, who left the stage to become one of the pioneer aviators of America. Johnstone was killed later while looping the loop in a western city, the accident occurring at the peak of his career as a pilot, when he was universally recognized as one of the world's most daring stunt fliers.

Buckner continued as a stage attraction, later on to do some looping of his own on Broadway, but he likewise suffered a serious fall, bouncing right into several hoosegows, just as he was being universally recognized —and applauded, as one of the most daring racketeers on the big alley.

Buckner breezed along when the stage-school fad was getting its second wind. The period of exploitation had been passed and the stage specialist was given room in the roster of necessary evils. These educational plants were turning out graduates daily, but their responsibility ended with the presentation of the diploma. It was then up to the pupil to shift for himself, and the theatrical agencies exhibited then, as now,

mightly little interest in a non-experienced professional.

Arther was a gifted conversationalist. And he knew the stage backwards and frontwards, for, it must be remembered, he was a finished showman. But he wearied of blowing up leaking bicycle tires and decided to employ his lung power in the more profitable and pleasant pastime of inflating equally leaky theatrical bladders, all dolled up in attractive corporation titles.

The chump who tosses his bankroll into any racket revolving around a theatrical enterprise is not referred to as a "Sucker." They dignify this particular brand of yokel with the label of "Angel." And if all the angels, whose financial wings have been seared by racketeers of the stage, head for the place where angels are supposed to go, there will be nothing left but standing room for those who qualify for entry on arrival.

The theatre seems to charm the average layman; and many men who could easily afford to purchase a theatre, property, ground and all, will go to silly extremes to procure a pass for a theatrical performance. Just to exhibit the complimentary slip seems to give them a great kick and every day finds some ordinarily conservative business man spending ten times the cost of a pair of seats entertaining a manager or press

agent for the sole purpose of cadging one of the treasured pass slips.

Buckner wisely decided to commercialize this condition. If the sucker market could support countless sharpshooters who wouldn't know their way around back of a theatre curtain, what a natural cinch it should be for a man with his practical experience in the profession to dash right through the ranks to the front line of success and fortune.

Accordingly, he packed his bicycle-act in camphor and started out on the make, armed with a pocket full of tri-colored business cards, and a swell line of gab built around a lot of good inducements for cash-bound angels. Arthur had an idea that any old carpet layer could be properly groomed into a matinée idol. He laid out a course of lessons, patterned after a Childs' restaurant menu card, rented a string of offices in the Strand Theatre Building, right on Broadway, advertised for prospects and waited.

The interior decorator who arranged Buckner's "Come-on Parlor" apparently was experienced in the construction of maze concessions for amusement parks. It would take a sheriff nine hours to reach the skipper, but a sap could find him in three seconds. He had a sheriff-proof entrance and a chump-proof exit.

And Buckner dressed his commercial stage some-

what like a musical comedy director would arrange a scene. "Secretaries" were distributed here and there; "dancing instructors" were properly planted, ready to go right into a hoofing spasm at the prearranged cue; vocal teachers idled in position, prepared to burst into song at the mere sight of a likely investor. And the minute a stranger ambled through the door, the balance of Arthur's supernumeraries began chattering about theatrical profits in figures that would better fit the national budget. A poor simp with only ten grand in his kick felt like a bum prowling around the U. S. Treasury on his initial bow into Buckner's studio.

Occupying the entire side of one large room was a miniature stage with regulation footlights and side hangings. A tubercular piano helped out the picture. Most of Arthur's investment went to a sign painter. His monicker was spread all over the glass front facing Broadway. A guy with weak lamps would go dizzy reading the list of corporations and enterprises Buckner was fathering. What a dish for an angel looking for a business opportunity!

They came, singly, doubly and in flocks. Five Hundred and Twenty Percent Miller was a laugh beside Arthur. He was blessed with a personality, made to order for the skeptic chump. When Arthur poured an earful of theatrical advice into the skull of a pro-

spective investor, that bird left his office with the fixed conviction that the fellow who wrote the show business did it with a slate pencil. He felt he had been wised up by the real Solomon of the show world, for Buckner was not a shrinking violet when it came to a description of his own capabilities. He could, with a fifteen-minute educational conference, send a Bronx butcher around to Belasco's office, convinced that he was capable of demonstrating to the Dean of the drama how his climaxes should be staged.

Arthur made a perfect first impression. A sucker was his pal five minutes after the initial meeting. How that boy could coo! Pig iron would melt in his mouth. Those who thought they would like to become actors banished the thought after a short confab with Buckner. He wouldn't allow them to waste time and money. Nice fellows like that should be allowed in on the ground floor. Buckner's enterprises would make them millionaires. And Arthur was so assuring, the applicants actually begged to be taken in.

Buckner knew his stock and bond lingo as he did the language of the stage. He would send his visitor's hopes skyward on an air wave of prosperity predictions and then jerk him back to earth to gaze on an impressive array of gilt edged stock certificates. And

according to the record, every angel who called on Arthur left his office happier but poorer.

The Buckner headquarters hummed with activity. Advertisements in the theatrical trade papers promised immediate work for idle professionals, and those amateurs who took a course in any of his several classes. Buckner, being of the stage, knew how to frame his advertising copy to insure a visit from the majority of the large army of actors out of work. They came in scores to enroll in Buckner's agency and await the customary call for engagements. To all outward appearances this was the most prosperous organization in the theatrical belt, but in reality the promoter wasn't turning over a single dollar.

Harlem haberdashers, mid-city merchants, Chelsea carpenters, Brooklyn bakers, all types of men looking for the short-cut to riches, came to investigate, and one by one they poured their cash into Buckner's lap, receiving in return some of his engraved stock certificates, carrying title to shares in this or that corporation. He peddled portions of "Buckner's Vaudeville Agency, Inc.," "Buckner's Dancing School, Inc.," "Buckner's Dramatic School, Inc.," "Buckner's Costume Co., Inc.," "Buckner's Scenic Studio, Inc.," and a dozen different other corporations, all dealing with industries allied to the theater.

Buckner, well known to the profession, was getting a hearty laugh for his circus antics, but the angels came nevertheless, never hearing even a titter. And they always found the office crowded with soubrettes, prima donnas and hoofers, carrying all the visible indications of big business.

The blow-off came when Buckner missed out on the count of his certificates. Somewhere a secretary had fallen asleep at the switch. He started off nicely selling quarter interests in the various propositions, with a few half interests distributed here and there. It was a silly error for a smart racketeer like Buckner to make, for he could just as easily have given birth to a few new corporations to take care of the overflow. However, he slipped up on his table of fractions.

One afternoon some of his angels happened to visit headquarters to check up on their particular corporations and became acquainted with each other. It developed that to a group of six investors there had been sold three half interests and as many quarter parts in one of the various companies.

Confronting the promoter they demanded an explanation or restitution. That was something even a financial wizard like Buckner couldn't explain, and his promotorial expenses had depleted his immediate cash account. The angels took a ride downtown to the

District Attorney's office, and when Buckner's predicament became public, the prosecutor's office was besieged by a small regiment of tradesmen who were laboring under the delusion that they were headed for financial glory in the show business.

When he concluded singing his ballad of defense, Buckner was booked for a few short terms in stir and even convinced one jurist that he qualified for a rest cure in an insane asylum. He wound up his career on a train bound for his home in Canada, the Federal authorities finally ordering him deported.

So Broadway is finally minus Arthur for all time. He staged the best comedy-drama the big street has ever produced. He shook Suckerville with sobs, but he rocked Racketland with laughs.

Good old Arthur, the kid with the talking lead pencil!

CHAPTER VII

THE IRON HAT

ENGLISH JACK is dead, but the tales of his countless exploits will make great telling wherever racketeers assemble for years to come, and his many schemes to separate a sucker from his surplus cash will be copied by hustlers yet to be born.

English Jack was a big, broad shouldered man, weighing some 200 pounds. He had nothing in common with your everyday racketeer; for Jack was neither good-looking nor educated. As a conversationalist he was a total loss. Yet he had an invaluable sense of humor backed by a bold front, and in his twenty-odd years of Broadway activity, he managed to convert both into a good living, accompanied by nearly $100,000 in cash which he left behind.

English Jack was originally a brick mason. When he migrated to Broadway he was promptly pegged as a copper, for he had exactly that appearance, and when he spoke, he did so with the same authority one would naturally expect from a patrolman ordering a bunch of corner loafers to move on. Seldom profane, when

he was aroused he would greet his hearer with a volley of phrases that would make a past master in the forbidden tongue blush with shame.

Aware that his general physique conflicted with finer racketeering, English Jack decided to commercialize his natural shortcomings. This he found a comparatively simple problem; for he could with equal ease impersonate a policeman, a fireman or the trainer of a stable of race horses. He chose the two latter professions, alternating them during seasons. In the summer when the racing season arrived, English Jack, armed with credentials of a horse trainer, sold many a "good thing" to the folks who followed the gee-gaws for a thrill. When cold weather arrived Jack decided to do his "bit" for the brave laddies who fought the city's fires, and to this phase of his career we will devote this chapter.

The film industry was climbing into the sphere of big business, and despite the fire laws prohibiting the storing of film in any of the industrial buildings, the exchanges, producers and others in that business would occasionally wink at the ordinance. One would see large shipments of the product banked in office corners, or being carted through the halls without the tin covers called for by the laws of the city which were enforced by the Fire Department.

This situation gave English Jack an idea. His proposition was strictly on the up and up, but Jack never overlooked an angle that might aid him in his chosen line, and he soon developed into one of the best canvass men around Broadway. But Jack's method of procedure defied imitation and his system permitted him free *entrée* to sanctums the average racketeer could never invade.

He became associated with an organization composed of retired members of the Fire Department. The title is of no consequence, but annually, or semi-annually, it was the custom of this group to stage an entertainment and dance in one of the mid-city halls. English Jack promptly saw possibilities in the program of this affair, and procured proper credentials to solicit advertising copy for it, working on a commission basis. He also sold tickets to those who preferred making a donation in this way, rather than purchase space in the book.

Jack's approach was a classic in itself. First, listing his calls for the day, he would visit them in the order of their prominence. Entering a telephone booth in or as near the building he intended visiting as possible, he would call the office and inquire if "Captain Williams" had been there, merely answering "Fire Department" if his name was requested. Naturally receiving a neg-

ative reply, he would hasten to the scene before the tenant could make the necessary preparation to receive such an official.

Closed doors meant nothing to English Jack. And few ever demanded to see his badge or other credentials. His appearance was sufficiently convincing. Once within, he gave an officious-looking glance into corners, asking a question now and then anent the location of extinguishers, and when he seemed to have attracted as much attention as he wished, he would invariably fall to his knees and, jerking a folding footrule from his hip pocket, begin measuring the distance between doors, or from the door to the window. As a crowning convincer, he generally raised the window opening on the fire escape, and did some extra measuring there. He cared little for zero weather or those attacked by the wintry drafts that followed the final operation.

If any one questioned him, Jack would bark like a wolf at them, although his initial scowl generally drove the average filmite far back into a shell of silence. With this little detail attended to, English Jack would draw a large black book from his pocket and make a few notes. Occasionally he would guide the conversation around to a point where the tenant admitted knowledge of a violation of the fire laws on the prem-

ises, but English Jack would be careful to make no promises or threats or ask any favors.

That, as the master of ceremonies might say, concluded his portion of the entertainment.

But Jack would hardly have time to reach the corner when his partner would arrive, possibly walking in on the very subject of fire laws, violations and "The Captain." The newcomer was a smooth talker and soon got down to business. He was there to sell advertising space in the program, or tickets if they so preferred.

It took but a minute to bring the name of "Captain Williams" into play, whereupon the solicitor assured the folks he knew the Captain very well. In fact he and "Captain Williams" were pals. He could do anything with the Captain and was dying to prove it. The matter of ordinary violations meant nothing,—but a page advertisement in the program would make things doubly easy. And he generally landed it. Now and then a stubborn advertiser would insist on seeing the "Captain" again before signing on the dotted line or parting with the check. That was equally easy, for English Jack was probably on the next corner and with a little persuasion he would even tear the tell-tale page right out of the black book and toss it out the nearest window.

For many years English Jack played the rôle of fire-

man. He dubbed it the "Iron Hat Racket" and whenever he started on his day's tour he would merely remark, "Well, I guess I'll put the iron hat on and go to work." Return calls required no assistance. When the time rolled around for a new program, English Jack merely called for the boss of the office and whispered a few words about the boys expecting the usual donation. The whisper always worked, and often with a cash donation and instructions to forget the advertising copy. And that "extra donation" went right into "Captain Williams'" bank vault.

English Jack fell a victim to gall stones. But he played the rôle of racketeer right up to the moment they tacked the cover on his casket. When he became ill he visited the best medical specialists in New York. Told an operation was necessary, English Jack selected one of the most prominent hospitals in New York City as an appropriate place to have it performed. He called on the hospital authorities and told them he was a Captain in the Police Department who proposed undergoing a slight operation during his vacation period. Whether he was assured gratis treatment is unknown, but at least he was quartered in a private room and was given all the attention such an official rated. To prevent any disclosure of the scheme English Jack swore the hospital people to secrecy, advising them

that he was up for promotion and expected to be named as an Inspector in a few weeks, but if the Department executives learned he was going under a major operation they would remove his name from the eligible list. His secret was kept and the staff of the Hospital probably believe to this day that when English Jack failed to respond to treatment following the operation the city of New York lost an honored member of its police department.

CHAPTER VIII

CHARITY CHISELERS

It is written that "Charity covers a multitude of sins." Had the writer lived in the twentieth century he might have lengthened the sentence to read further, "And feeds a multitude of racketeers."

Charity gets a swell kicking around in Racketland, where thousands of hustlers, masquerading as solicitors, work it to their great financial gain in every conceivable manner. If every American dollar, given in the name of Charity, reached the spot it was intended for, Charity would long ago have been written out of the language, for enough money has been contributed in Charity's cause to lift the millstone of Need from this nation for all time.

The charity greenback is divided into three portions, with the smaller section generally reaching the intended beneficiary. And where donations are not carefully checked up, the chiseler pockets the entire amount, excusing the action on the theory that Charity begins at home. Otherwise he takes fifty per cent of the amount, the regulation fee. Another cut for the

promoter, generally twenty-five per cent, leaves the same amount for the organization treasury.

The racket comprises any number of hustlers, all working under the personal direction of a key-man. He is known as the Promoter and assumes all responsibility for the success of the project. As soon as a new proposition is launched, news of the details travels fast through the grapevine route of Racketland and soon a dozen different Promoters are bidding for the job. They confer with the executives, glibly explain how their efficient organization will insure the success of any drive for funds, assure the Committee that they will be relieved of all worry and labor, and exhibit numerous letters from other societies in which they are highly complimented for their ability and honesty.

When one lands the contract, he makes the best arrangement possible with the Committeemen. Such affairs generally include an entertainment and dance, and the Promoter takes over the duty of the ticket sale as well as the publication of a program in which advertising space is sold. The latter is usually worked on a fifty-fifty basis after all expenses are deducted. These include solicitors' commission of twenty-five per cent on all advertising, the cost of publication, telephone bills and incidental charges. The same arrange-

ment is made for the ticket sale, or at least that part of it handled by the Promoter and his staff.

Special stationery is provided for the Drive and credentials—generally a letter signed by one of the executives—is given to each solicitor. The Committee also supplies a list of prospective advertisers, ticket purchasers or contributors to the Promoter and permission is always asked, and generally given, to use the name of those behind the movement to aid solicitation. The Promoter works the racket from his own office, centrally located, and soon has surrounded himself with a staff of solicitors who specialize in this particular species of charity.

Every racketeer in this line has his own private sucker list. He knows those people who are charitably inclined and the various propositions they fall for. Some will give liberally to Catholic affairs, others invariably donate to Jewish drives, while still others will dig deep for the Protestant Church. Then the boys have a list of folks who are patriotic and will kick in the minute the flag is waved; another collection of names insures the success of any Drive where the kiddies are concerned; some others go strong for foreign missionaries, and so on down the line, so that every conceivable alibi for extracting money from the philanthropically inclined has its quota of expert rack-

eteers who manage to keep it in action the year round.

The Promoters, once a proposition is signed up, have little worry. They know the solicitors who specialize in that particular line and the word is passed along until a full staff is on the job. A meeting is called and the Promoter brings out his little card index file, containing the name, address and telephone number of every person who has contributed to all former projects in which he was interested. These are known as "Taps." The Taps considered easy to land are known as "Push-Overs" and the promoter holds most of the latter out for himself. For in this racket the Promoter works as diligently as any solicitor, for whenever he makes a score, he earns the amount of the commission, as well as his own share of the net profit.

At this preliminary meeting the Taps are divided between the various solicitors and no staff member is supposed or expected to make a call on another solicitor's Tap unless the latter grants permission. But while the office Taps are divided, the men withhold the names on their own private list for themselves. These, in turn, become office Taps, if landed, and when the next proposition is discussed will be found in the Promoter's office file. Dummy programs are provided the solicitors, with elaborately decorated covers, carrying the names of the prominent members of the various

Committees, together with a list of Honorary Patrons, some who probably never heard of the organization behind the movement, or at least are not directly interested in any way.

The bulk of the work is done over the telephone, the solicitors work right from the Promoter's office, where the necessary number of telephone instruments is always installed. The prospective contributor is called and the conventional canvass follows. Should he become interested and promise to donate, he is told one of the Committee will call on him at once. The solicitor—having permission to use the principal's name—always does so. Consequently the party called is convinced the request is made personally by the priest, minister, public official, or whoever sponsors the affair. Assured of a score, the solicitor immediately makes the call, picks up the cash or contract, and turns it in to the Promoter, receiving his commission at once. Where the Tap asks for a little time to consider the matter he is marked up as a "Call Back." These are followed up religiously until pinned down to a score or a flat refusal.

The canvass might be termed midway between a plea and a threat. But many of the crude chiselers never strike the happy medium, but come out flatly with a bald demand for aid. These solicitors prefer

to work rackets with a political angle or one which permits the introduction of city officials or labor executives' names. The political rackets are known as "Pols" and many a crooked scheme is hatched on a "Pol" angle that was never authorized by those whose names are used. Collecting money for a summer camp for poor children, or for free coal to be distributed in the tenement districts in winter is a favorite "Pol" game, the racketeer using the name of the District Leader without his permission or knowledge.

The great majority of those solicited on charity drives probably never heard of the organization or movement in question, but take the canvass on its face value and contribute chiefly because it eases their conscience and in order to put a stop to the continued calls of the solicitor. Once given the slightest intimation of a possible score, the charity chiseler will keep pounding away at his Tap, calling daily until something happens one way or the other. And if the Tap gives liberally this week to a certain cause, the same solicitor may call him again next week on a similar drive, of course giving another name on the phone, but reminding him he has heard of the previous donation and telling him the Committee on this particular affair confidently expect him to be as kind to them as he was to the other organization. In this case the

hustler simply sends one of his associates to make the personal call, the pair dividing the proceeds.

The racket isn't necessarily confined to the male racketeer. In fact some of the best solicitors in the field are of the opposite sex. One in particular who has been working around Broadway for many years, is classed far superior to any of her male competitors or associates, both from the point of genuine ability and actual returns. Her canvass is an oratorical gem, and being a former dramatic actress, she makes every sentence touch home. Being of the same name as a prominent society matron, she always uses her own name on her calls. And her clientele comprises as many women as men, for the majority feel honored by a call from her, feeling confident they are talking to her namesake who devotes much of her own time toward charity, but of a far different nature.

This little girl seasons her canvass with just enough of the personal touch to insure her hearer's interest. Getting her Tap on the phone she will open the canvass with a cheery "Good morning, my dear Mr. Blank, this is Mrs. —— speaking." Waiting for the return greeting she goes right into her wail. "Of course, you know," she begins, "I am on the Committee raising funds for the poor little kiddies of St. So and So Parish. It really is a worthy cause, or you know I

wouldn't become interested. I'm simply giving up all my social functions for the season just to make this drive a great big, wonderful success." She continues with some convincing palaver, giving the names of some prominent millionaires as contributors—names of people the Tap hears and reads of, but never met and probably never will—and with some additional personal chatter finally makes the touch. If the Tap hesitates, she chides him on his philanthropic reputation or proceeds along a flattering line that would make the most modest man on earth swell with joy, believing, as he does, the voice at the other end of the wire is that of the society matron. And she cleverly plants this thought in his mind, casually referring to the weather as great for golfing, or a fine brisk day to follow the hounds. And when the big-hearted boy opines he will take some tickets, place an advertisement in the program or make a personal donation, she tells him she will send Briggs, her butler, or Graves, her chauffeur, right around for the cash. Working with a partner as she always does, she dispatches this chap posthaste to the Tap's office with a note, the pair dividing the commission when received. Just a little matter of balancing the exact truth on the fine point of a phone conversation, but legitimate in every sense of the word. And this lady turns over thousands of

dollars weekly to various charity drives, of course extracting her share of the boodle first. But, after all, the money she attracts would probably never reach the treasury were it not for her ability, hard work, and, of course, her private sucker list.

The average solicitor likes to hustle on a proposition where he has some municipal organization listed as the principal. These racketeers travel all over the country, promoting rackets of their own, cleaning up handsomely in each town and leaving a portion of the money behind them to those who stood behind the proposition. Even the police departments are utilized on profitable angles. The promoter will visit the authorities of a medium sized city and suggest a drive for the pension fund of the Police Department, assuring the executives they can, honestly, and without the slightest embarrassment to the department, collect a handsome total for the treasury. The only thing required is proper credentials, known as "Creeds" and the city telephone book.

The canvass is carefully prepared to avoid any possibility of a squawk, but the language is constructed to sound like an obvious demand for funds. The solicitor will reach a Tap and identify himself as the Chief of Police. Briefly explaining the nature of the drive he will advise him that one of his men will visit

him during the day, expressing the hope that he will take good care of him. When the hustler visits the prospect, he leaves little to the imagination. The same methods are employed on drives in which the Fire Department, Municipal Employees, Court Attendants, Health or Building Department or any other branch of a city's organizations can be induced to grant permission for the staging of an entertainment or ball. And the people called upon are hardly expected to refuse, for the racketeer compiles a list of those business men in the city who are likely at some time or other to ask favors of the municipal authorities. And during the personal chat with the Tap, he is diplomatically reminded of this possibility, being also assured, in an indirect manner, that his status at Headquarters will be measured according to the amount of his contribution.

The solicitor works many angles for his personal benefit, while hustling on a proposition. This is known as Hundred Percenting and must be accomplished without the Promoter's knowledge. Those generally known to practice these schemes are blacklisted by the better class of Promoters and only make connections when the propositions outnumber the solicitors.

When a Tap agrees to purchase a dozen tickets at $5.00 each for an affair, paying cash for them, the

solicitor nonchalantly suggests that he might not be able to use them all, of course, first waiting until he has received the cash. He then suggests that he might allow him—the solicitor—to turn them over to an organization that provided entertainment for wounded soldiers If he is given six or eight tickets for this purpose, he merely returns the tickets to the Promoter and holds out the cash. And cash donations seldom reach home at all. The solicitor generally pockets the entire amount himself. If a check is given, made out to the Treasurer of the organization, the crooked hustler can easily cash this in one of the clearing houses that make a business of cashing such paper at a discount. He simply endorses the name of the Treasurer, adds a phoney name beneath it and the owners of the clearing house—generally a speak-easy —sends it through his bank for collection in the regular way.

There are, to be sure, countless propositions operated by such Promoters that are strictly on the up-and-up. These men publish programs annually, counting on the renewals of advertising contracts for their income. The advertiser purchases the space as a matter of courtesy to the organization behind it and renews it annually. This simply necessitates a personal call by the solicitor for a signed contract, and new

copy, if any, the collections being made by the main office from whence a bill or statement is mailed the advertiser in the regular way. These Promoters pay commissions on receipt of contracts, awaiting their end of the profits until the collections are made.

But the average Charity chiseler is always broke. He rambles around from one proposition to another, apparently never tiring of calling on Taps. And many people are inclined to believe that would the smart solicitor turn his attention to legitimate business he would be a howling success. Some have tried and failed dismally, simply because the cut-and-dried canvass will not stand up in a regularly organized business enterprise. And when the hustler must get away from his stereotyped spiel he seems helpless. And he lacks confidence when he is playing a natural rôle, but he certainly is a wow when he is impersonating—on the telephone—the Reverend Cuthbert Weems.

CHAPTER IX

THE TIP RACKET

THE squawk of a plucked sucker is music to the racketeer's ears, but the wail of a cheater, who has been tagged with a double cross by a mob of hustlers, makes the former sound like the chirp of a tubercular wren.

When a chump is clipped for his bankroll the resultant squeal is natural, and of course expected by those on the right side of the laugh. But when a racketeer suffers a financial kick-back from one of his own weapons, his howl can only be equaled by the noise of a colony of infants suffering from the colic. And, somehow or other, that coterie of chiselers who park on the fringe of society for their easily earned incomes would rather listen to the bleat of a cheated cheater than hear the Declaration of Independence read aloud by the original signers.

The smart racketeer seldom stacks the cards on any one who registers a hundred per cent in honesty. But in this enlightened day of trick laws and shrewd lawyers, an honest man is as difficult to locate as the

feathers on a frog. Find your modern without his little dash of larceny and a close inspection will show him listed for immediate attention by the mortician and tagged for a shroud. The philosophy of the racketeer ranks honest men with good coppers—both dead.

When a sharpshooter spots his man and labels him for a possible touch, he first ascertains his views on lawful larceny. If the subject shows a willingness to take a short stroll up the dark alley of the law, after being convinced there is an exit at the other end, he is promptly labeled a good prospect. If he shows an inclination to balk at anything bearing an odor of the illegitimate, he is given a speedy go-by. But show a smart mob the boy whose mind is full of larceny and they will pass three meals daily for a week to entertain him. That party might just as safely bank his pennies on the bed of the Atlantic Ocean as keep them in the same county with his newly made acquaintances.

One of the latest schemes concocted by the white collar boys to relieve their brethren of some surplus cash is called The Tip Racket. Some heavy scores have been credited to this highly interesting little pastime and since it takes considerable time and rather elaborate preparations to prime the sucker for the final touch, the prize must be worth the gamble. The operating mob must also be reasonably well schooled

in dramatics for the victim is generally a bit suspicious, and a poorly timed cue or an error in judgment would gum up the works entirely, causing a loss of valuable time as well as the initial investment.

The Tip mob consists of from three to five members, all carrying a good front. They must necessarily be polished conversationalists, with at least a smattering knowledge of everyday topics. And they must know the general rules of poker, draw and stud. The racket is mainly worked by two members, one being the steerer and the other commonly known as "The Millionaire Kid." The remaining members of the mob merely fill in the picture, playing incidental rôles in the game.

The steerer locates the sucker, who, in the case we propose to illustrate, happened to a jeweler with a business office located in the heart of the Broadway zone. This chap ran a buy and sell shop, but in purchasing his stock seldom questioned the source so long as the price asked was satisfactory. While it was generally whispered about that he was nothing more than a fence for stolen baubles, he never ran afoul of the law and conducted his business openly despite the whispered rumors. However, if he were ever punished for receiving stolen property, and the laws of the land decreed that the sentences of the father should be visited on the sons, that bird's descendants for the

next forty generations would be christened by numbers instead of names. Once located, his habits were easily ascertained through a day by day check-up. He occasionally attended the races and was a chronic boxing fan. Because he would risk a reasonably large wager on a fight when he saw which way the so-called "wise money" was going, he was listed as a member of the "In the Bag Club."

One evening as he was about to close up business for the day, the steerer entered his store. Cleverly enacting the rôle of a man whose conscience has a scissors-hold on his tongue, he confided his wishes to the jeweler. He wanted a little job attended to in strict confidence. The cost meant nothing to the new client, but the workmanship must be guaranteed and the affair kept a close secret. The order called for the duplication of a string of valuable pearls.

Could the jeweler capably and confidentially fill this little order? He certainly could, and to assure the dapper patron that his confidence was sacred he invited him to the rear of the store where they would not be interrupted or overheard as they rehearsed the details. Once seated, the visitor frankly informed his new found friend that he had a deal on that entailed the services of an expert jeweler, but which, in no manner, would compromise him in the least.

It developed that a young man was in town hilariously celebrating the recent death of his wealthy father. At the very moment he was ensconced in one of Broadway's big hotels, doing his utmost to break the existing champagne drinking record. To lighten the monotony, and to keep his mind sufficiently occupied to ward off the expected delirium tremens, he would sit through an hour or two of stud poker with a few friends, invariably quitting the game a few thousands poorer.

This wealthy young fool, according to the steerer, had a valuable pearl necklace owned by his mother, but in his possession for the time being, for safe keeping. The lad wanted an exact duplicate made in order that he might turn the original into ready cash. The workmanship must be flawless in order not to arouse the suspicions of the parent. The jeweler's fee meant little to the client for the original necklace would market for upward of a hundred thousand dollars. Another small detail called for a tilt in the charge in order that the steerer might realize something on the side.

The jeweler was eager to accommodate. He saw the possibilities of purchasing the genuine necklace at a bargain figure. He agreed to double the price to the young man in order that the steerer might get his

share. So that gentleman immediately registered his good faith by handing the jeweler a hundred-dollar bank note, the price agreed upon between them, while the latter promised to charge the genuine client double that sum, turning what he received from the lad over to the steerer.

No receipt was asked for or offered and no appointment was made for the delivery of the necklace, for, as the steerer carefully explained, the kid was on the second leg of what promised to be a two-week drunk and nothing would be permitted to interfere with his little party. The jeweler was plainly given to understand that the kid was fabulously rich, had a burning yen for champagne and poker and had implicit confidence in his "pal," the steerer. The latter, however, left little for the jeweler's imagination. He was strictly "on the make" and proposed to roll the kid for whatever he could. As far as he was concerned he was just a wealthy kid-sucker, ripe for a touch, and if the steerer didn't trim him, some one else surely would.

A few days passed and the jeweler's morning mail brought a clipping apparently cut from a magazine. It detailed the death of one John Morton and told in a paragraph of the immense wealth in cash and property holdings inherited by his only son. It also briefly touched on the latter's home town escapades, corrobo-

rating the steerer's remarks to a degree. This, of course, was set up in a job printing shop, with the other side carrying the facsimile of an advertisement for some national product, to give it the appearance of a printed page.

That evening the jeweler was again visited by the steerer. An appointment was made for the following day after business hours. He told of the prolonged debauch of the young man, estimating the cost of champagne imbibed at several thousands of dollars, not to mention the amount tossed off in the periodical poker games. Careful not to overstep the conversation mark, the steerer skillfully built up the kid, in the jeweler's eyes, as the prize sucker of the decade.

The following night the two met and adjourned to the kid's suite of rooms. What a stage setting! Empty champagne bottles in every corner, half consumed glasses of the liquid here and there and the remains of a bounteous repast on a tray adjoining the bed. Besides the kid himself, three others were present, all apparently well oiled up on the bootleg grape.

The jeweler was introduced to the kid, who in turn presented him to his companions. More wine was ordered, the kid meanwhile discussing the matter of the necklace with the visitor, incidentally promising to come around to his store in a day or two to make some

purchases for his sweetheart. He also explained he would procure the genuine necklace in a few days from its resting place in a safe deposit vault, and after a bit suggested a game of poker.

The game began, but the jeweler was not invited to sit in. He watched the play from a nearby chair and after several hands had been played, the kid, who had lost a few hundred dollars, decided to retire. The steerer and the jeweler left.

As they walked up the street the steerer confided to his companion that the kid had upwards of eighty thousand dollars in cash on deposit at the hotel desk. And he also ventured that he could be relieved of the entire sum at one poker sitting. He discussed the possibility of introducing marked cards, but immediately vetoed such an idea, obviously fearing the kid might detect them and forever kill his chance of a golden harvest. Besides, he declared, it would be ruinous for him to win any large sum from the kid because of their close friendship. Some other plan must be devised.

Suddenly the steerer was attacked by an inspiration. And accompanying it was a complete scheme, fool-proof and sure-fire. In fact it seemed too simple to be true, and yet it was. It entailed the simplest program imaginable, one that would keep every one aloof from suspicion, yet in one score wipe the kid entirely free of

all his ready money problems. The jeweler was to sit in the game while the steerer placed his chair behind that of the kid. As the latter's card arrived, the steerer, through a set of scheduled signals, would apprise the jeweler of his hand and accordingly direct the play for him. Because of the close bond of friendship existing between the steerer and the kid, he would never suspect the tip-off, and with a little patience the jeweler would eventually break him of his last dollar.

Would the jeweler become a partner in the deal? Certainly, why not, and what on earth could or would deter him? It was little short of criminal to allow a halfwit to carry so much idle cash and besides it would bring him nearer the genuine necklace, a fact that hastened his decision. The next two hours found the pair busily rehearsing a set of simple signals. The steerer skillfully compiled a code that could be worked orally or by signs. If one failed the other couldn't. At the close of their conference they had perfected a language of their own and decided the next night opportune for the killing.

The following evening the pair met at the appointed time and place and journeyed to the kid's rooms. The same crowd was present and a stud poker game was in progress. The kid seemed reasonably sober, and even as they entered an aproned waiter was busy pre-

paring a tray of drinks. After greeting the visitors the kid invited them to sit in the game, advising them the limit had been placed at the size of the pot in sight.

To the uninitiated poker player this limit seems reasonably small, but in reality it runs neck and neck with table stakes. If, for instance, quarters are used for the average bet and five quarters are on the table, the next bet can be an equal amount of $1.25. This makes a pot of $2.50 and the next player can bet that sum and so on until the play is halted.

The steerer decided not to join the game, complaining of a headache, at the same time selecting a chair immediately behind the one occupied by the kid. The jeweler agreed to sit in for awhile and found a vacant seat directly opposite. No chips were used, the play being for cash only.

The game being stud, with only one card buried, the steerer had little work to do, being merely obliged to tip off the kid's hole card. Even with three other players in the game, the percentage favored the jeweler, for with one player covered, he could, by carefully exercising patience and good judgment, wait for the right spot and score successively whenever he had only the kid against him in a play.

The game continued with the steerer never failing to wig-wag the proper denomination of the kid's hole

card. The jeweler was assured of his accomplice's honesty, for the kid foolishly turned over his hole card after every play. After several hands had been played the jeweler found himself ahead a few hundred dollars and the boys decided it the proper time to introduce the "cooler."

The "cooler" is a deck in which a set of different hands have been placed, and allowing for certain players to drop out at given points in the play and one hand will be the winner by a single point. The introduction of the "cooler" is made immediately after the regular cards in play have been cut. As the dealer passes that deck to the adjoining player for a cut, he brings out the prepared deck in his other hand, carefully covered by his handkerchief. When the deck in play has been cut and returned to him, he picks them up with the empty hand and skillfully passes the handkerchief over them, returning both handkerchief and deck to his pocket, at the same time placing the prepared deck in play. The sucker's attention is generally taken up by a question and the switch in cards made while his eyes are pointed elsewhere.

The first two cards were dealt out and the steerer signaled the kid's hole card as a queen. The jeweler caught jacks, back to back. The pot was raised and

re-raised. Finally one of the other players, who continued to call each raise, exposed his hole card and retired, showing a pair of nines. The third card failed to better the kid's hand and the betting continued until another player retired, exposing a pair of tens. The fourth card was dealt and still the kid had nothing better than a queen high. His initial bet was the size of the pot and the remaining player dropped out, while the jeweler doubled the amount in sight. The kid returned the compliment with a similar raise and the jeweler, a bit worried, exchanged signals with the steerer who confirmed the fact that a queen in the hole was the kid's highest card. The jeweler, with considerable of his own money now at stake, saw the last raise and again doubled the center money.

Before the fifth card was drawn the jeweler had his last dollar in the center, his investment on the "sure thing" representing approximately sixteen thousand dollars in cash. The cards were dealt and the jeweler, failing to better his hand, saw a queen drop before the kid and realized he was beaten. But to eliminate all doubt of a double cross by the steerer, the kid flipped over the hole card, showing the queen of spades, the exact card signaled at the beginning of the deal.

With $16,000 gone, the jeweler might have been ex-

pected to call it a day, figuring on the morrow and a fresh bank-roll. But this particular dealer in stolen baubles, convinced that his loss was due to a wild turn of luck, retired temporarily, promising to return with new money. Calling the steerer aside he implored him to hold the crowd together until he returned, and, of course, that individual solemnly swore he would do all in his power toward that end, but counseled him to hasten back before the kid became too intoxicated to continue the play.

In a comparatively short time the jeweler returned, well heeled with a new wad of yellow bills. One of the original players had left, it being explained he had an appointment and might join them later. The game continued four-handed, much as it did before. For about an hour the action was slow, what few big pots appearing coming between the kid and one or both the other players, with the kid generally on the losing end.

Finally the "cooler" was brought out again and the jeweler given his pair back to back, these being aces. The kid meanwhile had been playing recklessly, showing unmistakable signs of too much wine, but continually calling for more and more. The kid's hidden card was also an ace and was so signaled to the jeweler by the steerer. The betting progressed until it reached big money and the fourth card found only the kid

opposing the jeweler. This play brought the latter his third ace, while the kid exhibited a possible straight from the ace to the five with the deuce missing. The jeweler's hand showed one deuce in sight and he recalled that another had previously appeared before one of the other players, leaving but two in the cards remaining. The kid's single chance to win the pot was through one of these dropping on the last play, but it was obvious he was going after it, for he called each raise and continued to double the size of the center money until finally the jeweler dropped in his last bank note. More than fifty thousand dollars decorated the table, of which nearly half belonged to the man holding three aces.

The last cards were dealt and down dropped the deuce to the kid, giving him the high hand and the money.

Broke again, the jeweler was still to be convinced that his only combatant was dumb luck. As he departed for more money, he was followed closely by one of the mob, none other than the missing member who had failed to return during the second play. He tailed the jeweler to a Broadway restaurant where the boys of the evening are wont to meet and discuss the sucker market. Here he endeavored to negotiate a loan, prom-

ising to return it with interest as soon as his bank opened for business in the morning.

The shadow recognized the man approached as a prominent Broadway grifter, but could not hear the ensuing conversation. The jeweler was seen to plead with his friend, but the latter evidently was suspicious, for the jeweler had the reputation of being as close as a split second and three times as small, and was never known to accommodate any one with a cash loan without double the amount in negotiable collateral. Finally he was seen explaining the game, with accompanying gestures that left little doubt as to the subject of the conversation and the hilarious laugh that came from the listener gave ample evidence that the racket was due for an immediate exposé. The two talked long and loud, the jeweler soon departing in a rage for his own shop. Armed with a gun, and accompanied by two of Broadway's best known strong-arm boys, he moved on the scene of his great adventure.

But when he arrived he found the quarry gone, for a phone call reached the mob just as he left the restaurant. But the boys always like their little laugh and the hotel clerk handed him a scented noted signed by the steerer, advising him to cancel the order for the duplicate necklace as the kid had decided to have one made up in Paris, whither they were bound.

CHAPTER X

DAYTON DON, P.A.

DON HARPER ambled proudly through the front door of Ohio State University, armed with honors and degrees galore, and headed straight for the financial district of New York where he confidently expected to transform his knowledge into fame and fortune. He was a skilled accountant, a master mathematician and knew financing from the cellar up.

Harper originally hailed from the home of Boss Cox, in Dayton, Ohio, and was one of the minority who hoped to lift the Democratic nominee into the chair at Washington that was found later to have been made especially for Warren G. Harding, also an Ohioan. Every one in the state figured that Ohio would eventually be mighty proud of at least three native sons, Harding, Cox and Harper. Don's folks were comfortably fixed in finances, but hardly needed a family member to keep them in order, and naturally encouraged the collegian's ambitions to go East and show New York in general and Wall Street in particular how to keep its books straight.

When he landed in New York he carried sufficient

cash to keep him comfortably for at least a month. And fortunately,—or unfortunately, according to how you figure the finish,—Don located in a furnished room in the Roaring Forties. His neighbors were all city-wise, sociable and generally busy. They seldom discussed their business, but Don soon learned that one was a waiter in a night club, another was a bookmaker, while the balance of them held positions varying from stage doorman to night manager in an all-night restaurant.

Don spent the first few days getting his initial eyeful of New York, by day and night. He prowled around Broadway until the lights were doused, took in the movies and patroled up and down the main stem until he knew every shop on every block from Forty-second to Columbus Circle. Every morning he parked his tired body in the waiting room of a dozen different offices, waiting to see the big boss, to land the one big job that would start him on his way to the top rung of that trick ladder they call "Success."

But at the end of the third week the bankroll was getting low. Harper had heard the landlady's monologue on rent day when her auditor tried to pay her off on alibis, and he didn't relish the idea of listening to her conventional spiel about the high cost of taxes,

the overcharges of the electric and gas companies and the other wails that generally accompanied a demand for back rent. And he didn't cherish the thought of wiring home for financial aid, especially since he had written his folks that everything looked lovely and the big town was a cinch to lick.

But something had to be done to keep tossing the very essential hot meat behind the gums and to be assured of a nice warm pad for the brutally cold nights. And something was done; but it resulted in a sharp detour that aimed Dayton Don right away from that boring path of righteousness in through the back door of Racketland to where the sugar comes soft and the living is easy. And Dayton Don's racket is one of the gems of the decade, for his send-in is perfect and he stands no more chance of a bad fall than an iceberg does of raising a fever blister.

Harper's hook-up in Larceny Lane came innocently enough. The landlady, who seemed to know every one's business, suggested one of her roomers might be able to help him land a job. Merely to be pleasant, Don accepted the introduction and met George Helbig, who professed to be a retired business man. Helbig took Don around the corner, where they sold good beer at a quarter a copy, to talk things over. Here, the old gent cleverly milked Don of the history of his

life and when they decided to call it a night Don was feeling half tight and admitted it. The beer was good. Helbig insisted on paying the check and in doing so exhibited a bankroll that fairly screamed "Business is Great." He promised to ponder over Don's case and hoped to have something favorable to tell him the following evening.

Don dined in the Automat the next day and loafed around the house all afternoon, waiting for the good news. Helbig, true to his word, dropped in shortly after dark and invited Don around for a few beers. And after they had gulped down three or four of the best needled product on West Forty-sixth Street, Helbig unfolded his plan in detail and framed the neatest little racket the street has boasted of since the Gondorf Brothers tore down their shingle and backed into retirement.

That night Harper slept like a log. He even forgot to wind the alarm clock. Under his pillow were parked five brand new bank notes good for a century apiece. Helbig had slipped them to him between the sixteenth and seventeenths beers, telling him he had to get a Fifth Avenue front and struggle along for at least two weeks before they could register a score. It was only a loan and Don could pick it up on the first job worked.

The next morning Helbig checked out of the side

street flop joint and took a rattler for a small factory town in New England. The name of the thriving little hamlet doesn't matter, for the boys are probably still on the make up in that territory, and why smother a million-dollar racket for a two-dollar book? At any rate Helbig arrived and registered at a family hotel, getting a rate by the month. He told the clerk and others who cared to listen that he was a tired man, through with big cities for life. After forty years in one industry he had sold out and was going to settle down in a small town and *take things easy*. Of course he didn't emphasize the latter portion of his intention, although that was literally what he meant to do.

The next day Helbig visited the town's best bank and opened an account with a deposit of several thousand dollars. This naturally called for an introduction to the president of the institution. To the latter official Helbig repeated his plans, adding that if he could find a good, going business at a reasonable price, he might be interested. At any rate he was tired of New York and was here to stay. He also intimated that he might become an important depositor, explaining that his attorneys were now closing the New York deal that would retire him from business and that when the expected check arrived it would run in the six or seven figure class.

Every small town banker knows the business conditions of his city. And he also knows where a bargain can be gotten so long as one has the necessary purchasing paper. A smart banker will steer a prospective investor straight, even going right through with him to the end of the deal. And a wise banker will clip off a small percentage of the take for his interest and labor. Helbig was given a half dozen propositions for consideration. He selected a mill that had been established for years. The owner, like Helbig, was getting tired and wanted to retire. He was, in fact, so anxious to retire that he was willing to make a big sacrifice for cash. The proposition called for a big investment, but the annual business insured a reasonably fair return and for a man like Helbig it looked like a perfect buy. Helbig was interested and an appointment was arranged.

Accompanied by the banker, he was taken on a tour of inspection around the mill. He looked into every nook and corner, asked question after question, talked here and there with various employees and seemed to show a favorable reaction to the deal in general. Meanwhile the banker was doing a perfect job for him, telling the mill owner that Helbig was a man of untold wealth and ready and anxious to get into action in a local enterprise. And the mill owner, as any mill

owner would do, added a few thousand dollars more to the figure he intended asking, this being the usual program in business when a buyer is a man of means, anxious to get into action.

Following the inspection the trio returned to the executive offices to discuss terms. The selling price was quoted, the usual dickering ensued and everything looked rosy for all concerned. The one detail necessary was to call in the legal talent and call it a sale. That detail entailed the introduction of Dayton Don. Mr. Helbig, in his very best business voice, assured the mill owner that he was thoroughly satisfied, but of course, before investing such a large amount of money, he would want his accountant to look over the firm's books and make a report on the financial angle of the proposition. And Mr. Bank President assured the mill owner that such a request was entirely proper and definitely proved that Mr. Helbig was a smart business man and one who knew his way around the block. And Mr. Mill Owner simultaneously agreed that such a request was strictly in order, in fact he would have suggested it himself had Mr. Helbig overlooked the item.

Mr. Helbig then advised them that Mr. Harper, his accountant, was now in New York, examining the books of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, having just

finished a job for Henry Ford, but he would ascertain just when Mr. Harper could journey up and give the mill the financial "once over." At that very minute Dayton Don, as per schedule, was in a public pay station, waiting for the call. And with much gusto, Mr. Helbig, using the mill owner's private phone, called the number. Don and he then held a short conversation during which it developed that Mr. Harper could jump up to New England for a few days immediately, but must return at once as the New York Central Railroad were pestering him to examine the books of their main office, as was his usual custom at this particular time of the year. That sounded good to the two local industrial giants and as Mr. Helbig left the office he apparently overlooked his card case, which he had consulted to get Mr. Harper's correct telephone number. In this, should any one be curious enough to look, would be found some interesting correspondence. For instance there was a report signed by Mr. Harper of an examination of the books of the firm of Helbig and Sons of New York, showing balances here and there that would wipe out the foreign debt. Also a few personal letters from J. P. Morgan; a bank book on a big institution showing deposits that ran perilously near to a million and a few other little items that would convince any pocketbook-peeping-Thomas that Mr.

Helbig was not worrying about his next meal. And in the event the mill owner didn't find the leather during Helbig's absence, that gentleman phoned him on his return to the hotel, excitedly inquiring if he had lost it during the visit and requesting the mill owner to be kind enough to look around for it.

The next day brought Dayton Don on the scene. Tortoiseshell spectacles and a few brief cases made up his parcel of luggage. And from the train he went direct to the mill where Helbig, the banker and the mill owner were in conference. And how that apostle of Ohio's democracy could chatter and chirp! He reeled off banking statistics to the small town money changer that made his hair bristle, and he coughed up figures that made the banker's Adam's apple bob up and down with excitement. And when he met the firm's auditor he rattled off details that made the poor individual feel that he had only gone half through the kindergarten in mathematics.

For two days Dayton Don played with the books of the mill. And while the books of a mill pay slowly, they pay a racketeer—like Dayton Don—exceeding well. Finally he told the bull-necked keeper of the books that he was through, congratulated him on the neat and simple set of accounts he handled and spread out a string of balance sheets to show he had the en-

tire financial picture of the firm photographed on paper in red and black. But the bookkeeper didn't take a second look or he might have noticed that the majority of the balances were photographed in red.

He then visited the mill owner. And to that astonished individual he confided that, under no circumstances, could he conscientiously advise Mr. Helbig to invest good money in such a flimsy project. And Dayton Don had the figures to back up his decision. It simply would be nothing short of embezzlement to take the price asked for the proposition proffered. In fact, in some states, it would come under the criminal code, and Mr. Harper, a respected, reputable, legitimate public accountant, could never, under any circumstances, allow himself to become a party to such a steal. Dayton Don must have delved deep in the details of elocution at Ohio State, for he uncorked a canvass that had the mill owner on the verge of repentant tears, almost to the point of calling up the local D. A. to give himself up.

And then the kid from Dayton, who couldn't find an opening in Wall Street, threw a shovelful of healing ointment into the open wounds of the poor mill owner.

It developed during Don's canvass that this Helbig wasn't such a great guy as he cracked himself up to

be. To be sure he was wealthy, having cleaned up a fortune during the war, but he was a greedy Dutchman and was always looking for an ace in the hole and expected two jokers in every deck. And it seems that Dayton Don had done different jobs for Helbig for the past four years, steering him into marvelous bargains, but never getting the least bit of thanks. Even for this job, he probably wouldn't get more than a few hundred dollars and Don was getting tired of jeopardizing his eyesight for coffee-and-cake money.

But Don had an idea. He liked the mill owner and he wanted to see him get rid of his mill. He also wanted to clip the Dutchman for some money and was even willing to spatter up his own perfectly spotless commercial reputation, provided the mill owner would help kick the good thing along. It would take him less than an hour to doctor up his report on the financial status of the organization, and the report he would turn in would send the Dutchman into a series of joy spasms that would cinch the deal at the mill owner's price. In fact, the latter could tilt the ante a few thousand to make up the difference Dayton Don's fee would cause. In plain words, if the mill owner would present Dayton Don with $2,500 cash, right now, everything would be hunky-dory and the Dutchman could go whistle at the moon when he found he was clipped.

And any time you run across a New England business man who won't cough up $2,500 in a deal that runs into six figures, notify the municipal alienist and slap him right into the booby hatch. With all the advance work by Helbig carefully planned and better staged, the mill owner thought Dayton Don's price was dirt cheap. And with the cash in hand, the latter proceeded to show Helbig and the banker a report that read like a lunacy indictment for any one who would part with such a business bargain at the price asked.

Helbig promptly agreed to buy. But he must have his New York attorney on hand to seal the title. That meant a day or two delay. And the next day Helbig withdrew his account from the bank, ostensibly to sew up the transaction with the mill owner. From the bank he went to the railroad station and took the first rattler Westward to New York City. And that night, over the needled beer in the Forty-sixth Street joint, Dayton Don and Old Man Helbig split up the mill owner's two and a half grand and picked out the next town where retiring business men would be welcomed and where Dayton Don could demonstrate his mathematical prowess for the financial welfare of the firm of Helbig and Harper and for the honor of good old O.S.U.

CHAPTER XI

FIRE-PROOFERS

THIS racket is listed with the various species of panhandling and no self-respecting racketeer, from the high class con-man who plays exclusively for big stakes, down to the lowly lush worker, who prowls around dark halls and alleys to steal from sleeping drunks, would be seen associating with the derelicts of the racket mobs that follow this line as a means of livelihood.

The Fire-Proofer is so called because he makes a business of "saving souls" from the fires of Purgatory and Hell—at fifty cents a soul. He usually enters the calling innocently enough, and generally leaves the racket flat when he has earned a stake, although many stick to it permanently because of the easy work entailed and the remuneration derived, with little chance of apprehension or punishment. As in every other racket, the Fire-Proofer must fit his rôle perfectly, for only certain types can follow the game with any degree of success.

One of the few of this ilk to crash the portals of

society in Broadway Racketland was known as "Petie the Priest." He traveled under the name of Horton and by his own immediate friends was referred to as "Mac." He was an inoffensive type of chap and was tolerated around the high spots of the big street principally because every one believed he was a trifle balmy. He was looked upon as a religious loon.

Petie would automatically bend the knee joint whenever he passed a house of worship, whether it be of Roman Catholic denomination, Episcopalian, Baptist, Christian Science or a Synagogue. He was apparently the most devout Christian on Broadway, yet he never went within a church. And whenever a loaded hearse rolled by, Petie would doff his skimmer and make the sign of the cross on his forehead.

In a crowd, whether it be on a street car or in a hotel lobby, if some one sneezed, Petie would reverently and audibly murmur, "God bless you," and earn a nod of approval from all within earshot. If the victim took an encore on the nasal tornado, Petie would chirp, "Christ bless you."

Always garbed in somber clothes, cut along clerical lines, he had a knack of looking heavenward and rolling his peepers as though he were swapping thought messages with the sentinels on high. Petie wasn't acting. He simply couldn't stop playing his racket rôle.

The regulars took wild guesses as to Petie's past life. The most brilliant one was that he was a disappointed theological student who had been kicked out of college early in his career for cadging cigarettes. "Pleased to meet you, have you got a cigarette?" was Petie's initial speech at every introduction. But even this guess was a mile wide of the truth, for the only institution Petie ever attended was the "College of Talk and Take." And he was a day and night student at that temple of knowledge, graduating with the degree of Master of Take.

Petie operated his racket from an office in the Filching Forties. He was known as a Field Director and had charge of a group of solicitors. The latter were procured through advertisements in the Help Wanted columns of the daily papers, the advertising copy calling for salesmen—"*Catholics Preferred.*" The applicants for positions were interviewed by the chief of staff and were hustled through the conventional intelligence test. They had to qualify on general appearance, speaking voice—one of the important factors—and were expected to be able to rattle off long sentences well seasoned with three- or four-syllable words and with an occasional passage from the Holy Scriptures. If a job seeker bore a churchly look he was immediately engaged.

Those selected were turned over to Petie to begin rehearsals in the canvass of the racket. Petie gave each points on light and shade in the rendition of his speech, taught him how to gurgle a ministerial blessing, and instructed him on the proper manner to make the sign of the cross and when to do so most effectively.

With the preliminary education completed, Petie and his pupil would saunter forth through a selected zone, which for the graduate would be his commencement exercises. The Fire-Proofer confines his activities to the poorer wards, working those areas generously populated by Italians of the laboring classes, principally because of their recognized ardent devotion to the church. Besides, this type is less likely to identify the illegitimate church worker and no time is lost, since they are practically all members of the Catholic faith. And as it is generally understood that the Latin worshiper will give to the church before the home, it is consequently this class which provides a constant source of revenue for the Fire-Proofer, or soul-saving racketeer.

This racket is worked only in the daytime, during regular working hours, when the male member of the family is away. The lady of the house is considered the easiest to "sell" and the hustler begins on his rounds

at early morn, knocking off as soon as he hears the shrill squeal of the five o'clock whistle.

Petie and his pupil would sally forth laden with miniature images of holy figures, rosaries and small cards engraved with the likenesses of the various saints. Through these objects the Fire-Proofer keeps an accurate count on all those solicited, together with an estimate of the day's cash receipts. Some of the more enterprising combinations publish a monthly pamphlet carrying from four to eight pages of religious text, all rehashed from legitimate publications of the church. These are distributed as convincers, and along with the premiums given each subscriber, a copy is promised monthly to those who are gullible enough to swallow the Fire-Proofer's canvass. At the same time the promoter uses this item in his program as another means of checking up on his solicitors.

Petie would take his pupil right into the homes so that he might watch and study every speech and gesture to learn first hand just how every emergency was covered. For every little obstacle encountered during the canvass, Petie had a highly convincing argument in reserve, and once he completed his spiel, nicely seasoned with excerpts from the Testaments, the pious, unsuspecting housewife generally went to the little cup in the cupboard and withdrew the amount required to

insure the immediate elevation to Heaven of those particular relations whose status in the next sphere might still be in doubt.

Entering the first home, Petie would piously make the sign of the cross, and with the soft, sympathetic croon of the minister or priest making the rounds of his parishioners, he would look pleadingly toward the ceiling, and call on the Lord and all the Saints in Heaven to bless all those in this home, praying that He forgive them for their sins, and asking that He pay particular heed to the souls of those departed from this earth in general and this home especially. With this little routine unloaded, Petie would then open his canvass by presenting one of the holy articles to the lady of the house, at the same time extracting from his pocket a small pad and pencil. Across the top of each slip on the pad is engraved the picture of a holy figure with a few lines in Latin added to make it look the more genuine.

Proceeding with his canvass he would inquire the names of all those members of the family who had departed from this earth. Should the lady be fortunate enough to have her family intact, with no deaths recorded, Petie would ask for the names of her dead parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents and other relatives until he had sufficient names to fill out the several

dotted lines on one slip. Where he lacked enough names to fill the page Petie would call for the names of any ailing members of the family.

This little detail attended to, he would then tell the lady he was sent to her by Father So-and-So or that he comes from This-or-That Holy Order, and he proposes to have masses celebrated for the repose of the soul of each of the departed relatives. His canned speech visualizes the miracles performed by such masses, to both the living and the dead, the tag line arriving with the presentation of the slip, carrying the names of those recorded, for her signature. And as the lady is affixing her name to the paper, Petie would bring his best selling voice into play, informing her that a nominal charge of fifty cents per name is made for the masses.

Before she can remonstrate he would go onto the high pressure canvass, telling her the little gift she just received was blessed by the Pope and carries with it, for her only, a number of special indulgences which none but the Holy Father can dispense.

Should the woman solicited hide behind a plea of poverty, Petie, in slightly raised voice, would berate her for her infidelity, and proceed to work on her religious superstitions from every angle. He would tell her that every penny given to the church returns

a hundredfold, etc. He would picture the calamities, accompanied by untold suffering, scheduled for those who refuse to donate. The ministerial monologue would continue, with Petie calling on God to witness the shame of such people who would permit their own flesh and blood to perish in Purgatory rather than pay fifty cents per soul to send them rattling on high gear through the golden gates of Heaven in a six-cylinder platinum chariot.

This and other arguments, dished out in Petie's inimitable manner, would be brought to bear on the conscientious church-goer until one would prove sufficiently convincing and the householder would go to her little secret house bank and procure the amount requested by the racketeer. Then he very generously blesses every one in the house, chucks the little children under the chin, and makes his exit. Visiting the neighbor across the hall, Petie would exhibit the signed slip of the woman whose folks had just been fireproofed, and generally very little argument is necessary to add her to his list of enrolled subscribers.

Of the money collected in this fashion, fifty per cent goes to the promoter and the remainder goes to the Fire-Proofer, who generally chisels ten per cent of the other's, as well, although the slips are numbered and counted when turned in. A door-to-door canvass

finds the experienced hustler in this racket—such as Petie—saving enough souls to insure him a daily income of from twenty-five to fifty dollars.

Should his credentials be demanded by a householder or police officer, the Fire-Proofer falls back on the promoter, who generally has his tracks well covered. He can always prove, if necessary, that he has arranged with the pastor of some suburban church to have mass celebrated on a certain day for the deceased of his Order, and this seems to cover the law.

The Fire-Proofer has been repeatedly denounced from the pulpits of churches, but he continues along on his merry, profitable daily way just the same. There are few as able as Petie in the racket, and none so experienced, but new recruits are enrolled weekly, and unless the game gets too hot for the boys, your children's children will probably pay the popular prevailing prices to have you fire-proofed by some future disciple of Petie the Priest.

CHAPTER XII

FREE LOT RACKET

To interest a prospective sucker in any racket it is well first to convince him that he is going to get something for nothing.

With this thought in mind the Free Lot Racketeers have hopped across the country, cleaning up small fortunes at every stop made, with only a smart line of chatter, a set of mysterious looking realty maps, and an option on some suburban acreage that generally bounces right back to the owner as soon as the boys have come and conquered and left.

The Free Lot Racketeer spends much time in the preparatory stages of his scheme, but once the trap is properly loaded, he springs it with speed and accuracy, registering a score with every snap, until he has milked the territory dry. Then, like the Arab, he folds up his outfit and silently exits.

Coming into a city, the first move is to procure an option on a parcel of unimproved property somewhere in the suburbs, but in a location that will appeal to the person who seldom leaves the city. A site surrounded by, or near water, is always preferable, and

since the actual cost is of little concern to the racketeer, he generally selects the most attractive piece of land available, for his basis of operations. It must contain anywhere from a hundred city lots upward in size, and some of them must be of an undesirable type, the kind a pauper would refuse as a gift. He visits the land owner and proceeds to negotiate for the purchase of the entire plot. When a satisfactory price has been reached, he asks for an option for ninety days, paying a few hundred dollars in cash as a deposit, to be applied on the purchase price when the deed is finally transferred. When this detail has been attended to, he advises the owner that he proposes to promote a developing company and sell the lots in individual parcels.

The next day he engages, through the aid of the Help Wanted columns, a number of girls, whom he assigns to the task of procuring a sucker list. These girls, paid $25 weekly, are sent into the various tenement districts to solicit signatures and addresses. They call on the housekeeper during the day and advise her that they are employed by an advertising organization which intends holding a great raffle shortly, in which, for no cost whatever, they are liable to win a handsome prize. The lady solicited is merely requested to sign her name on a dotted line and receives in return a coupon with a serial number. The girls are expected to

return to the racketeer from twenty-five to fifty signatures daily. And only one signature is taken from each house, for too much discussion among the neighbors anent their "good fortune" would arouse suspicion.

With this list of prospective chumps, all indexed in a card file, the racketeer assembles his staff of salesmen, all good talkers and well versed in matters pertaining to real estate and particularly that piece of real estate on which the racketeer holds a ninety-day option. They take the cards and personally call on each resident who has signed one of the slips presented a few days before by the girl. The canvass is well prepared, short and convincing.

He opens by requesting the lady of the house to show him her coupon stub, asking her if the number is —for instance—1888. Upon examination she learns, to her surprise and joy, that the number called is correct. And she also learns that she, above all others in the drawing, has won a lot, free and clear, all ready for the little bungalow she has so often dreamed of, but never expected to own. The canvass continues with a general description of the estate, the natural advantages, the beautiful water front beach, etc. Incidentally, it might be mentioned here, these visits are timed for the evening so that the breadwinner of the family will be present to share the good news.

And, having hopped the sucker up to fever heat, the racketeer then tells his audience that a fee of $10 will be charged for the examination of title and the legal transfer of a deed. This must be paid now to insure early delivery. An impressive looking receipt is given in exchange, but even should the "Lucky Person" fail to pay the amount asked, the racket is only half worked and the subsequent move takes him into camp. The visitor then instructs the family to be ready to visit the scene the following Sunday, when they can examine the lot won by them in the drawing and make final arrangements to take possession. The Developing Company—always one with an important-sounding title—supplies buses for the transportation of clients right to the site.

The following Sunday finds the city family, along with dozens of others, on their way to the water front property plot. Their friend, the salesman, is on the job to meet them. Consulting a large map, all foreign to the sucker, he picks out and escorts them to the lot —No. 1888—which they were fortunate enough to win. But Lot No. 1888 doesn't look worth the carfare it takes to reach it, nor is it. However, the good-hearted salesman has an idea. He shows them an especially desirable lot, suitable for a corner and one that is likely to be after development gets under way, accord-

ing to him, which they can buy for next to nothing, in a trade-in for their own piece of ground. The real cost of this site, according to the canvass, is set at $500 by the company, but by turning back the lot they won, the couple can take it over for $300. And if they show evidence of having only half that amount to their names, he will agree to accept that as an advance payment, the balance to be paid at the rate of $5.00 monthly. However, under no circumstances is he to permit them to leave the scene until he has clipped them for whatever they can arrange to kick in, in cash, either immediately or the following day.

The sale arranged, he requests the receipt for the $10 given him on his former visit, explaining that this fee will apply to the search of the title for the new lot bought, and that the proper papers will be delivered when they close the deal and make the initial payment.

For ninety days the racket is a matter of Steal and Stall and when the option is up the Racketeer merely tells the property owner he has decided not to go through with the deal and pulls out for the next scene of operations. What happens after his departure is a local matter and doesn't interest him in the least, since he is probably a thousand miles away, very busy on a new development proposition.

Another amusing angle of the Buy and Sell species of racket deals with the Silver Fox Farm game which was cleverly worked through the Middle West, and especially in the State of Michigan, until John Law stepped in and made it too tough for the boys to continue.

The Fox farmer located along the state highways, having an imposing looking front, with the animals housed in a hutch that ran along the roadside. Invitations to visit and inspect the farm were posted on large signs at the entrance. Once a visitor entered, he was canvassed on the idea of buying a pair of silver foxes for breeding purposes, the farmer explaining he was willing to sell some of the animals because of a need for ready cash. He also exhibited documentary evidence anent the business possibilities, assuring the purchaser he could make several thousand dollars on the young in a season and still own the original pair. Many bought, paying various prices for the team. When they had been tapped for the usual feed expenses,—for it was part of the deal to keep the animals on the farm,—they were suddenly advised their animals had died. And with no way of proving otherwise, the sucker had no come-back and could merely accept his loss as a bad investment.

CHAPTER XIII

LAYING THE NOTE

Occasionally one marvels at the news that some yokel has invested his life's savings in the purchase of the Public Library, the toll concession of Brooklyn Bridge, or some other species of the ancient gold brick racket. It seems incredible that any one can be so stupid, particularly in view of the wide publicity given the schemes of the old-time confidence men. Even the art of short-changing, especially around the circus and carnival lot, where it was originally introduced and practiced successfully for many years, has been outlawed in the majority of rural districts. The small town hick has been educated, and if he doesn't approach the ticket wagon with the exact change, he manages to keep his eyes focused on every move of the dealer's nimble fingers, and has learned the wisdom of counting his change before leaving the window. And the concessionist who can gyp a hick on any of the old-fashioned count-down systems must credit his move to luck rather than ability.

But while the ruralite has been scratched from the sucker lists of the change workers, that time-worn

racket still flourishes, with the scene of operations moved to the big cities. The good old racket is being worked daily right in New York with amazing success, slightly altered in its mode of operation and carrying a new title, "Laying the Note." But nevertheless it's the same old short-change stunt with the sucker at the other end of the cash register.

Laying the Note is taken seriously in some of our states, where a conviction carries a rather embarrassing stretch in stir. In the South the operator is liable to a two-year bit if convicted, but in the Eastern cities, especially New York, the racket comes under the classification of petit larceny and six months in the workhouse is generally the outside penalty for those found guilty. And since it is a difficult charge to back up with proof of criminal intent, the racketeer figures he has better than an even chance to beat the rap unless he carries a police record of former conviction.

The racketeer works alone in the note game. He may have a companion if desired, to be used as a witness in case of an arrest, but the second party takes no part in the job and can only act as a blind for the operator, or to stall the victim should a chase ensue. And the profits derived hardly justify a partnership arrangement, consequently the note layer generally works alone.

His stock in trade consists of two bank notes, a twenty-dollar bill and a one-dollar bill. He must be a good talker with a ready line of conversation, generally prearranged and on a topic that is bound to interest the sucker. And, of course, a neat appearance is always an asset in any racket. The job is always pulled at the cash register, and this being near the exit as a rule, allows the racketeer an opportunity to leave hastily in case of necessity. But the note hustler seldom runs. A chase is always avoided whenever possible. He depends on sheer nerve and his ability to feign innocence should the victim prove to be getting a second lesson in the game.

Restaurants are classed as good marks for the note layer, for there is generally only a girl cashier to dicker with and a little well-placed conversation generally insures his success. A good-looking racketeer seldom worries over the average girl cashier, for a smile and a few remarks about her beautiful eyes will eradicate all ideas of larceny from her thoughts. If she exhibits evidence of knowing the ropes, a hasty apology soon adjusts the matter, the change is corrected and the racketeer evaporates in the outside crowd. Or he may compliment her on her sagacity and with some choice chatter smile his way right out of the fix. Even

a good-looking racketeer has many a hero worshiper among the fair sex.

The racketeer first enters—for instance—a restaurant and his purchase will come to any amount less than a dollar. Let us assume his lunch cost sixty-five cents. He approaches the cashier with the check for this amount and tenders the twenty-dollar bill for payment. He immediately begins talk, which is known as the canvass in the jargon of the racketeer. The subject is selected to interest the girl and might touch on some motion picture star; the current headliner at the nearest theater; the leading topic of the day's news, or anything else that will necessitate a reply, or lead to a brief conversation. Under all circumstances the racketeer must divide the girl's attention between the matter of making change and his simple query.

She places the twenty-dollar note in the register and lays the $19.35 on the counter. Never touching the paper money, the racketeer picks up the thirty-five cents in silver, at the same time asking for a pack of cigarettes. As the girl reaches for the cigarettes, he extracts from a handy pocket the single dollar bill. As he pays the girl the exact change for the cigarettes from the silver, he holds up the one dollar bill exclaiming, "That's a hot one; here I had a dollar bill in my pocket all the time and didn't know it."

He keeps this bill in sight all the time in one hand, reaching with the same hand for the nineteen dollars on the counter. But as his hand approaches the money, he folds up the dollar bill with a swift motion and conceals it in the palm of his hand, at the same time, with a single move, folding up the ten-dollar bill with one turn in such a way that it is hidden within the remaining nine dollars. Meanwhile he is asking the girl another simple question and looking her straight in the eye.

He merely holds the nineteen dollars in plain sight, now that the ten-dollar note is secreted within the other nine, the girl naturally thinking he has placed the single bill he discovered in his pocket on the same pile. He then asks if she would give him a ten-dollar bill for the ten bills in change.

However, the racketeer holds the money in his hands until the girl gets the ten-dollar bill, which bill he promptly pockets, handing her the nineteen dollars originally received, with the ten in it still hidden from view. He then starts for the door. Lighting a cigarette, in order to give the cashier an opportunity to discover his error, he stalls until she apprises him of the mistake in change. In the event the girl overlooks the mistake, or decides to pocket the extra nine dollars

herself, the operator returns as though he had suddenly discovered the discrepancy.

Should he be called back, however—and it is nice to think he would be—he is shown the nineteen dollars and told he has short-changed himself. His canvass continues and after telling the girl how nice it is to find some people honest, probably promises her two tickets for the best show in town, adding that he is the producer, star or agent. And ninety per cent of the girls will immediately begin making mental plans for the best use of the promised tickets, forgetting for the moment the nineteen dollars resting on the counter.

Then comes the tag line. The racketeer brings forth the single dollar bill, which he exhibited, palmed and pocketed a moment before, and tossing it down with the other nineteen dollars, suggests the girl may need the change and with the twenty dollars in sight, asks for his twenty-dollar bill in return. And the same percentage of cashiers will have forgotten all about the ten-dollar bill she handed him before and hasten to oblige by giving the racketeer back his original twenty.

For awhile the chain restaurants along Broadway were baffled at their daily shortages, always exactly ten dollars. Some of the most trusted employees were found short in their daily returns. Spotters were em-

ployed and still the leaks were found, merely because the racketeer picked his stores with care. Finally the executives engaged an old-time racketeer to solve the mystery. He realized immediately that a note layer was working and assembling the girls one morning demonstrated the racket exactly as it was being worked. The following day the little sign over each register reading "COUNT YOUR CHANGE BEFORE LEAVING THE DESK" was amended to read "COUNT YOUR CHANGE BEFORE LEAVING THE DESK—WE DO."

Good hustlers register as many as twenty scores a day and in many instances work the racket twice in the same place, for the shortage is seldom noticed until the count is made at the close of the day's business and by that time the cashier has quite forgotten the incident. Incidentally, this racket is not practiced alone by the men. The ladies of the mob have become quite proficient, working shops where young men are back of the cash register. The same methods are employed, with a little sex appeal utilized cleverly as a mind disturber.

Many a smart cashier will smile pleasantly should you ask for two twenties for a ten, yet the same yokel will part with thirty for twenty and thank you kindly for allowing him to keep the small bills in his register.

CHAPTER XIV

STEER JOINTS

ANY gambling house, operated by cheaters, where the house rule is "Never give a sucker an even break" is known in Racketland as a Steer Joint.

They thrive on the money left behind by unsophisticated visitors, directed to the house by professional steerers, the latter receiving for their work a percentage of the player's loss. These steerers work from hotel lobbies, restaurants, night clubs, speak-easies and other public places and, as a rule, hold down appropriate jobs that bring them in contact with the transient visitor who might crave the thrill of a game of chance. The steerer may be your taxi driver, waiter, the bartender in your favorite oasis around the corner; he may be a bell hop in your hotel, or even the newsdealer on the corner.

The all-night lunch room is a favorite rendezvous of the steerer, and along Broadway, where theatrical people headquarter when in New York, these hustlers operate night and day. For the nomadic showman loves to gamble, is always well heeled with a bankroll

after a trip on the road, and, because of his profession, is seldom suspicious of strangers. Masquerading as an actor and dressed to fit the rôle, the steerer easily makes his acquaintance and after a brief chat, during which he tells him he is headed for a good game, he offers to introduce him if interested. They discuss the possibilities of a big coup and the steerer diplomatically learns how much his man will go for. This information reaches the house before their arrival and the play is gauged accordingly. A Steer Joint may feature a dice game, stud poker, draw poker, stuss, roulette, faro or any other gambling layout, although dice, which seems favored by the majority, is easily arranged, and provides the cheater greater opportunities to make a hasty killing.

Broadway's well-known floating crap game gave the racketeers in this field an idea that resulted in many of the Steer Joints now in operation around New York. The floating game was so christened because its promoters never held a session in the same place two nights in succession. Every gambler who ever visited New York took a fling at this game, for here there was no house limit to the play. And the game was conducted strictly "According to Hoyle." The floating game was supported almost wholly by professional players. It was moved nightly to prevent interference by the

police authorities and with the location a close secret the players felt more immune from stick-up mobs. One needed proper credentials to gain admittance to this parlor of chance, and each evening, at a certain corner on upper Broadway, pilots were stationed to give the recognized players proper directions to the scene of action for that particular evening.

On Monday the game might be played in a loft in the cloak and suit district and on Tuesday it would be transferred to a tenement in the East Harlem sector. But regardless of its location, a player would win a fortune here in a single night's play, and feel assured his winnings were safe until banked the next morning. The promoters provided escorts for those favored by "Lady Luck" and those escorts were generally known throughout the Underworld as dangerous men to bother. No gunman was ever indiscreet enough to attempt relieving a lucky player of his winnings between the time of his departure from the game and his arrival home.

To the floating game came the plungers of the road, the top money betters from all parts of America. Here they gambled the winnings of a long tour through the country in a single night's play, realizing that no percentage favored any one in the game, and luck alone decided their financial fate. While many of the big

money scores credited to this game were a bit exaggerated, it surely was no place for a piker. On more than one occasion the dealer saw upwards of $100,000 change hands on a single roll of the dice.

Recognized dice cheaters might participate, if they wished, but no sharp practice was permitted, or ever attempted. It could hardly be successful here, for the majority of the players knew every trick of the game, and those not quite so wise were amply protected by the management.

But the professional dice racketeer couldn't sit idly by and see a square game monopolizing the Broadway play, attracting, as it did, so much of the available sucker money. And, accordingly, he constructed a cleverly framed detour to look after that portion of the floating game's patronage that came under the classification of "Easy Money." And, surprising as it may seem to the uninitiated reader, this amounted to many thousands of dollars nightly.

The racketeer knew the addresses of all those spots where the floating game had its tables set up, and it was a reasonably simple matter for the promoter of the Steer Joint to learn the location of any night's game, merely by getting the directions from the outside men at the appointed spot. By simply fitting up a room with all the paraphernalia utilized in a regular

game, he was established in business, a competitor to the floating game.

He too had his steerers, but they merely loitered in the neighborhood where the square game was to function that particular night, selecting their victims as they approached the address of the floating game. Careful not to accost a regular patron, the steerer of the outlaw joint would halt his victim as he approached the building wherein the floating game was being operated. He would merely walk to his side and whisper to him to keep walking past the entrance to the next corner. The sucker would naturally assume the instructions were given for good reasons and would do as told, the steerer following closely behind. At the corner he would be told that the police had been tipped off to the address and the boys had moved to another site. The steerer would then offer to guide the sucker to the new location, first demanding that he identify himself. Few dice players would become suspicious of such an announcement and the casual player would never exhibit any surprise, for the floating game was known to be well organized and expertly handled, and this would be looked upon as the natural routine in the event of an expected raid. The average sucker, anxious for action, would follow the steerer without the slightest hesitation.

He would then be taken to the Steer Joint. Here he would find everything exactly as he would expect to find it at the floating game. A doorman would question his right to enter until given the O.K. by the steerer. Often this would be refused and another man called from upstairs to pass on the pair. All this, of course, was done solely to impress the sucker that he was entering a legitimate gambling house.

Once within the door, he would be ushered upstairs to find a dice game going full blast. To all appearances this was the floating game itself, but if the sucker had recently patronized that game, he would immediately recognize his present associates to be entirely different from those in the other house.

As they entered the door on the landing below, the doorman, the same one who questioned their right to enter, flashed a signal upstairs by means of an ordinary push button. This was the cue for all the modern Ali Baba and his forty thieves to fly into action. The fifteen or twenty hustlers within the big room would surround the dice table and begin betting with one another with a fervor that could only result from expertly directed rehearsals. These men, known as "shillibers," were simply employed to fill out the picture and give the game the desired atmosphere. They were allotted small bankrolls by the racketeer to

exhibit for betting purposes, among themselves, every penny of which must be accounted for at the end of the night's work. They were paired off and went through all the motions of gambling. They argued over bets and periodically cursed or cheered their "hard luck" or "good luck," all a part of the travesty and done for the sole benefit of the new chump.

In the Steer Joint the so-called box-man does the important work. He stands on a slightly elevated platform placed on the floor, and at about the center of the table. He catches the dice as they are rolled out, calling out the number thrown and returns them to the player. He decides all bets and throws in new dice when requested and otherwise directs the play of the game. His rôle requires a quick eye and a set of nimble fingers.

Ordinarily a set of square dice is kept in action, but in his box the game keeper has all sorts of crooked ones, those known as "Shapes," others called "Miss-Outs" and one set in particular, which are nicely loaded, and which he affectionately terms "The Dynamite." This pair is only used when an especially green player is steered in, for they are so heavily loaded with quicksilver that they almost turn somersaults to show up the desired number.

The Steer Joint usually houses a fading game. In

other words, the player can bet as he wishes. When he is throwing the dice he will naturally bet they win, but when other players are shooting, he can bet the opposite way. Consequently the box-man watches the sucker's play and when he has sufficient money at stake, he merely tosses in a pair of loaded cubes favoring the other side of the wager. When the final number is tossed he quickly rakes in the dice, and as the money is changing hands, substitutes a square pair for the next player. If the sucker is betting the dice wins, the box-man throws in losing dice; if he bets they lose, in go a pair of winners.

Immediately a chump signifies he is broke, the game slows up and a floor man discreetly suggests that those not playing will kindly "take the air." Non-players are not expected to crowd the table at any game, and the floor man's order is generally accepted as a matter of routine and seldom arouses the suspicions of any visitor. Once he has gone the racketeer takes inventory to determine the exact amount of the score. The hustlers are checked up, their working bankrolls again divided between them, and the stage is rearranged to accommodate the next victim.

The game continues throughout the night as long as the steerers provide clients. Sometimes two or three suckers are clipped simultaneously, playing among

themselves. But the box-man manages to maneuver the betting coups so that eventually they all pull up broke, with the house getting all the money.

The side bets between the shillibers are made sufficiently large and with the necessary melodramatics accompanying them, to convincingly hoodwink the most skeptical player. They even stage quarrels that dangerously approach a fist fight, but the box-man quickly quells such scenes, warning the boys about the danger of a visit from the cops.

When the night's work is completed, the hustlers are paid off for their duty, the steerers are given their division of the spoils and the sucker, minus his bankroll, seldom discovers that he was clipped in a Steer Joint, but honestly believes he was a participant in the famous floating game of Broadway.

CHAPTER XV

WATERED BOOZE

WHEN prohibition came along, it was accompanied by a new and strange type of racketeer who uncovered countless angles to evade its enforcement. The immense profits in this new form of graft induced many of the old line of hustlers to desert their own calling for the business of beating the Federal laws. It attracted the roughnecks of Racketland and resulted in an endless string of crimes of violence, crimes that will probably continue as long as the law remains on the statute books. Before the introduction of the Eighteenth Amendment, the average racketeer had a wholesome fear of the Federal courts. With public sentiment sour on the new law, and with the courts in many instances openly declaring against it, the chance of conviction and imprisonment seemed remote, especially to the fellow continually gambling with his liberty. Soon the Federal courts were jammed with liquor violation cases, the machinery became clogged up, and the racketeer was on speaking terms with a branch of justice that he previously most carefully avoided.

Corruption in the enforcement ranks simplified matters, and even were a bad rap registered, the sentence following conviction wasn't serious enough to worry the principal. Truck drivers and wharf loiterers became wealthy in the new racket transporting beer, liquors and raw alcohol about the city. Every office building had its bootlegger, and "drug stores" began to replace the corner saloon—ninety per cent of their business being liquor sales. Gin became the national drink and every one knew how to make it better than his neighbor. "Alky" could be purchased in the majority of drug stores, and diluted with water and seasoned with a few drops of juniper juice and essence of gin, it could be mixed for consumption in a few moments.

The gin racket and its accompanying profits caused many a promising counter jumper to give up commercial life for a career in popular crime. With alcohol retailing in the drug stores at something like six dollars a gallon, the amateur distiller soon began purchasing it in wholesale lots, deliveries being made in five and ten gallon tins. And the regular Gordon Gin bottles could be purchased in wholesale quantities, as well as forged labels and seals. With the stock on hand, nothing else was required but a bath tub. Ten gallons of alcohol, mixed with fifteen gallons of water and the

required proportion of juniper and gin essence, provided the bootlegger with twenty-five gallons of "Gordon Gin." The retail price, originally three dollars per quart, now varies, some selling it for half that, others grading it up as high as four dollars per bottle. Figuring the overhead at approximately seventy-five dollars for the lot, the profit at three dollars per bottle amounted to about three hundred per cent. Janitors and hall boys collected the empty bottles, reselling them to the gin merchant for a nickel apiece.

Neighborhood stores took orders from customers, getting a commission on sales, the bootlegger delivering the goods right to the front or back door. The gin manufacturer preferred not to deal in other liquors, but he could always procure anything ordered at the lowest market rates. Competition became so acute that the dealers were continually battling over territorial rights and many a brawl ended disastrously because an established bootlegger refused to yield to a business rival who backed up his title claims with the bark of an automatic.

The wholesalers likewise kept up a continual war, and in addition had the hijackers to contend with. The gun replaced the suave tongue in this racket and to the boldest, rather than the shrewdest, went the spoils. Yet there was room for the latter type of racketeer and

he managed to make his scores without recourse to any of the methods employed by those more reckless.

One smart hustler devised a scheme that earned him a fortune before it became generally known and employed by others who lacked the finesse and attention to details. He concluded that Americans just returning from Europe, where they could drink what and when they wished, would buy reasonably large quantities of liquors, provided they were assured they were getting the genuine goods, "right off the boat." Accordingly he stocked up with the best brands obtainable and then procured the passenger list of every incoming liner as soon as the vessel docked. He learned the name of each steward and merely impersonated that individual when calling those he attended during the voyage over. Where possible, he procured the home address and telephone number of all first-class passengers, but failing in this he merely consulted the telephone directory and located them at their offices.

Connected by phone with a tourist the day following his arrival home, he would identify himself as the steward, using a dialect if needed. He would advise the traveler that he had managed to smuggle in a few cases of choice goods, and would gladly deliver them at his house or office at cost, plus a small service fee for his trouble. The price quoted was that of the cur-

rent market scale, but the assurance that he was getting stock direct from the liner generally cinched the sale. The racketeer would tell his client he was sending the goods C.O.D. by one of the deck crew. Employing foreigners for the messenger service, the purchaser would accept the package in good faith, never realizing he had bought and paid for domestic stock, dolled up with phoney labels. And unless he was a connoisseur of the brand delivered, he probably accepted it as the real goods right down to the last drop.

Another smart Broadway racketeer successfully worked a scheme that netted him a fortune in New York City alone, before it was tipped off in the booze market, forcing him to depart for other fields where he is probably still selling the same line of bunk to unsuspecting saloonists and proprietors of "clubs" and speak-easies. His first victim, strangely enough, was a Scotchman, owner of a café in the Longacre Square district, popular with actors, race track followers and the general sporting fraternity. This Scot sold the best whisky procurable around the Broadway mid-town zone and did a thriving business. He had stocked up well before the prices went skyward and his profits, at sixty and seventy-five cents per drink, were enormous.

One evening he was visited by a dapper looking chap

who represented himself as a government employee. He explained that he had withdrawal permits in his possession, and that as a result he had for sale twenty barrels of high-proof whisky, promising safe delivery right to the premises. A bargain was made, with the Scotchman apparently getting away with the best of the deal. The date of delivery was fixed with the understanding that the contents of every barrel would be tested before payment was made.

That night two automobile trucks backed up to the saloon and the twenty barrels were hastily transferred to the basement of the building. For the next two or three hours the Scotchman was busy syphoning out a small quantity of liquor from each barrel and testing it with his gauge. Every drop registered the predicted proof and the Scot conservatively figured on a profit of a thousand per cent through retail sale. The racketeer collected his money in cash, thanked the contented buyer, bought drinks for the house and disappeared.

Some days later the Scotchman decided to try out some of the new brand on his clientele. He repaired to the basement with containers and tackled the nearest barrel. But after extracting about a quart of the liquor something happened. Try as he would he could

draw no more, although the barrel was obviously filled to the brim.

Getting panicky, with thoughts of his investment bouncing back and forth in his mind, he attacked the barrel from the other side. With a brace and bit he bored a new hole through the wood and allowed some of the contents to pour into a container. This proved to be nothing except pure but dirty water. Ripping off the tops of the remaining barrels the Scot discovered the trick. The racketeer had attached a hot water bottle, filled with high-grade whisky, to the bung hole of each one.

The Scotchman had paid for twenty barrels of bonded liquor, but received only twenty quarts; yet being a party to the violation of law he couldn't seek official aid. And being ashamed to admit having played the rôle of sucker his silence made it possible for the racketeer to make similar sales to many others.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PAY OFF

HORSE racing is universally referred to as the King of Sports. It might also be appropriately labeled the Prince of Rackets.

Ever since its inception the industry has provided a handsome income for countless racketeers, since its angles are many and in this particular racket the sucker field is continually in bloom.

The common or garden variety of tout comprises the great majority of that army of sharpshooters who follow the gee-gaws as a profession, but a few steps above this class one finds the tipsters who advertise extensively in the racing papers; the organized information dispensers who sell their guesses daily, some operating publications of their own; the high pressure interviewer who seeks out his man at business, and—for a stipulated sum—agrees to share with him the confidential information that will assuredly make him independently rich for a reasonably small investment; the Pay Off Mobs, the First-Past-the-Post operators, and, of course, the trainers, owners and jockeys who operate small stables solely to promote sucker money.

A good horse race will fascinate any one. The color and flash of the race track can be equaled nowhere else and once a chump gets an eyeful of his favorite nag in a head-and-head dash down the stretch, to win by the flicker of a lip, he generally tears the rubber band off the old bankroll, and, with a little argument, will shoot the works. And around the race track every one is an Elk, and strangers become pals in a minute over the exchange of "inside information"; all of which makes it easy for the racketeer.

The Pay Off racket is probably worked more extensively than any other of the racing species, for the returns are greater and, while it calls in many instances for elaborate preparations, like all good rackets the prize is well worth the labor expended. The Pay Off is also about the oldest racket identified with horse racing, and, while it is being continually exposed, new scores are registered weekly all over the country.

One of the largest takes ever accounted for by a Pay Off mob separated an Iowa banker from his last penny, the play being staged in one of the winter resorts of Florida. No less than seven or eight racketeers comprised the mob that clipped him, and a small fortune was expended in the elaborate layout that cinched the score.

The mob fitted up a fully equipped gambling parlor

and operated—solely for the sucker's benefit—a regulation pool room where bets were accepted on the races all over the country. The room was supplied with telephone and telegraph service and all the other accessories one finds in an establishment operated for the benefit of those who follow the thoroughbreds. Charts of the day's programs adorned the walls, a description of the running of every race was called by the announcer, and detailed dope on the entries was furnished as well as the various flashes of odds and other changes as they happened at the tracks.

The prospect was tailed right from his home town and when he arrived at the Southern city for his annual winter vacation the scene was all ready, for the actors had gone through a careful rehearsal of their prospective parts.

The steerer, who had become acquainted with him through a well-planned business deal in his home town, was in the hotel lobby as he descended for breakfast the day following his arrival. He warmed right up to his old acquaintance. They discussed the various topics of interest, and the steerer confided to the Iowa banker that he was in town for the month, having journeyed down from Broadway to take a flier on the races.

He was then primed for the convincer. The steerer,

with a perfect front, flashed a bankroll with a thousand dollar bill as a wrapper, advancing the information that he had won the money on a race the previous day. Accurate details anent the amount bet and collected had been memorized to substantiate the story should the sucker investigate the yarn, and eventually the steerer told his man that he had made a connection that prevented any possibility of a loss, although the method employed was a trifle shady. He then outlined his scheme. And to the chump it sounded foolproof and just as secure and positive of success as the steerer depicted it to be.

The next day the sucker was taken by the steerer to the office of one of the telegraph companies. As they entered the building they met a chap in the hall, coatless, hatless, and with some papers in his hands, to all appearances one of the firm's employees. The steerer introduced him at once to the sucker, explaining that he was the operator in charge of the racing wire. Being about lunch time, they arranged to meet him outside and discuss business. He soon reappeared, dressed for the street, and the trio took lunch together.

Here the steerer handed over several thousands of dollars in cash to the operator, explaining that it was his portion of the previous day's winnings. The sucker was told at this meeting that the game was

worked through the operator's ability to withhold the result of a certain race from all pool rooms for one or two minutes until the steerer can learn the name of the winning horse and place a bet on it at one of the local rooms. The sucker was offered an opportunity to get in on the scheme provided he agreed to give part of his winnings to the telegraph operator. And considering that he was fortunate enough to meet the steerer by accident, he promptly agreed to share his good fortune with the one who made it possible.

That afternoon the sucker was introduced in the pool room. Following instructions closely, he made a few small losing bets in the early races, and then he became an active participant in the crooked scheme to trim the book. Directly across the street from the pool room a man sat near a window. In the room he occupied there was supposed to be a telegraph instrument with a direct wire to the race track. As soon as the race selected for the killing had been run, the operator at the track flashed the winning horse's name to this room and the man in the window, by a prearranged code of signals, immediately relayed it to the steerer and his sucker in the pool room, and they in turn promptly bet on the winning horse. Since the operator at the local telegraph headquarters was supposed to be holding the result of the race back for

two or three minutes, they made their bets with comparative safety and a minute later the winning horse's name was posted. And they collected.

Of course the sucker was unaware that the operator he met downtown was one of the mob, and merely entered the building a minute or two before their arrival, leaving his coat and hat in a machine outside. Nor did he suspect that the man in the window was another of the mob who got the result of the race in the regular way through an information bureau supplying such service to all pool rooms, and that the man behind the cashier's window in the pool room knew the steerer and sucker were betting on a winner when he accepted their money.

However, the sucker placed his bet on the horse as signaled and collected his winnings, sharing them that evening with the operator. That bet was the convincer. The next day he was given another winner to warm him up right for the final move. He had been allowed to win a few thousand dollars of the mob's money, but nothing short of instantaneous death could keep them from getting it back with interest.

The same night he was given the big canvass by the steerer, the operator being present at the conference. He was told the racket was getting a bit hot and they wanted to make a final killing and leave town.

They told him investigation showed the pool room was good for a quarter-million dollar score. The operator claimed to be getting nervous about his end of the game and wanted to become independently rich before the inevitable blow-off arrived. And then the sucker was asked how much he could raise to place on a single bet.

This chump, thoroughly sold on the racket, suggested he return home and get a regular bankroll. The easy money already acquired had fired his gambling ambition to the sizzling point. He was all steamed up over the pool room program and his pulse jumped a beat every time he heard a race in a distant city described by the caller. But, like all yaps, that quick return on his investment needled his common sense. Every time he cashed a ticket on an even money shot he collected a hundred per cent on his speculation, and swallowing the old Pay Off yarn to the last morsel, this egg believed there was no chance to lose. As for taking his winnings through dishonest manipulation, that went right off the record as far as his conscience was concerned.

He packed his little keyster and took the first train back home. But the boys took no chances and one of them tailed him right to his front door, watching every subsequent move. He hiked back to Florida on the

same rattler with the chump, and reported his survey to the mob as fine and dandy. With a sweet load of Iowa coin in immediate sight, the mob went into a final rehearsal for the big play.

A race well down in one of the major track programs was selected because of the big field it carried. The day following his return to the city was picked for the operation, in order to give the gang a chance to arrange for a quick exit from town. And the intervening time was well spent in the big "build up," for nothing must be overlooked to keep the chump on the anxious seat. Every little signal and move was rehearsed and that night the sucker went to the hay to dream of untold wealth. On his previous visits to the pool room he had seen and heard bets way up in the thousands recorded and paid off, and he felt assured he was dealing with a reputable gambling institution, one that probably ran second—in cash on hand—to the Bank of England.

On the red letter day of the sap's career, he met the steerer early. They breakfasted together, lunched together and took a final walk around town, before repairing to the scene of the afternoon's business. The sucker's nerves were on edge, for he had his roll right next to his heart, enough to keep the entire mob on Easy Street for many, many seasons.

He made the usual preliminary losing bets, as rehearsed, and when the time for his big final bet approached, he carefully counted his money, having it handy to prevent any slip-up or delay. And to make the trick proposition look doubly sure, the steerer had given him all his own money to bet, explaining that it would look better for one of the pair to make the wager. Besides it would save time.

The little banker eagerly watched the window opposite for the signal. He wiped and rewiped his eye glasses to make sure he wouldn't gum up the works. Cold perspiration rolled down his neck and his knees were wobbly, for the slightest bloomer would—as he thought—financially wreck himself and the entire crowd.

And shortly before the signal was flashed, the steerer excused himself, starting for the wash room. He went through the front door and out through a rear exit, never stopping until he was safely aboard a train headed far North. But the sucker's mind was too occupied with the business at hand to note his disappearance until the blow-off came. The signal was flashed, exactly as arranged, and the banker walked up to the window and shoved through his fortune, getting the usual ticket in exchange, after hearing his bet called off by the man back of the little window. And,

strangely enough, the audible announcement of the big wager didn't even cause a ripple of excitement in the room.

The banker watched the man in the window disappear. Every second seemed to take hours in passing. He jerked out his watch a dozen or more times to note how many seconds the operator was holding back the result of the race from the pool room. Every sound in the room made his nerves bob up and down. He noted the steerer's absence and wanted to go after him, but was afraid he would miss something. He craved to hear the race called off, as relayed from the track to his pal, the operator, and from that cunning hustler to the man in the pool room.

Finally the announcer droned, "They're off," and all hands pricked up their ears to hear the good or bad news. The banker heard his horse's name announced as being in front at the quarter; also at the half, the three quarters and the stretch. His Adam's apple stuck in his throat as he waited for the final word that would cinch his fortune, and it nearly choked him to death as the announcer bawled out the winner as the horse he had bet on.

Now he looked around for his partner, but of course that boy was on his merry way. And as he stepped up to the window to collect, the announcer yelled out,

"Foul claimed in that race, the boys are in the judges' stand." A few seconds later he bawled out the fatal words "Foul allowed" and erased the name of the banker's horse from the winner's column, moving up the entrants as they finished, which made the second horse the winner and placed the banker's horse at the bottom of the list.

The banker was cleaned out. No one paid any attention to him and the business of accepting and recording bets on the following race went along as usual. He dashed into the wash room in search of the steerer and dashed right out again. He couldn't very well complain to the owner of the room, for he had knowingly helped fleece him out of several thousand dollars on the preceding days.

As he left the room he was closely followed by one of the mob. And the minute the door closed on him all business ceased for the day. One by one the supernumeraries, engaged to keep the room filled, walked up to the window and received their day's pay. This also was part of the racket. But this crowd were not in on the big take by any means.

The sucker was tailed to the telegraph office where he searched in vain for his friend, the operator. Inquiring for him at the desk, he left with a surprised and disappointed expression covering his physog.

During the entire operation he had only personally met three members of the gang, the bogus operator, the steerer and the man who relayed the signal from the window across the street. And these three boys were on a fast North-bound train.

Meanwhile the pool room was being dismantled. Every atom of evidence was removed, and the owner and his assistants scattered to various points to assemble with the rest of the mob at a later date where they would divide the spoils. But one of the organization stuck close behind the sucker and watched his every move. This member had a clean record and could stand up under a grill if the local coppers decided to take him in for questioning. But no one could possibly connect him with the job, for he had been kept carefully in the background during the entire deal.

The next day the Iowa banker went to the police. And this news was wired ahead to the mob, for it was obvious that the police chief would notify all big city departments complete descriptions of the principals, with orders to apprehend them. And they would be watched for.

But this squawk, like many others, washed away like last winter's snow, and eventually the chump returned to his home town, poorer, but lots wiser; for

when he filed his rap with the Florida coppers, he needed only to start the tale—for every dick in America knows the conventional program of the Pay Off racket—and they picked up the narrative and rattled it off right to the finale without the slightest error.

All of which proves that Experience keeps an expensive school, but fools will learn in no other, and very little in that.

CHAPTER XVII

"IN THE RED"

BANKRUPTCY proceedings provide a great "Out" for the fellow who has bitten off a larger commercial mouthful than he can comfortably chew, but it also provides a great "In" for the smart racketeer who knows his bankruptcy laws, his purchasing program and, by all means, the man who will take marketable assets without asking too many embarrassing questions. In the parlance of the police department, the latter is known as a fence. To the bankruptcy hustler he is really a gate, for he is the outlet by which the racketeer unloads his stock, leaving nothing for the receiver but a few headaches and the conventional set of alibis.

The bankruptcy game is a big business. It takes more than the average amount of intelligence to swing this racket, for the principal must understand market values, he must know the wholesale dealers and he must be generally acquainted with the various details and methods employed in handling the business in which he proposes to take the financial dive. And, what is most important of all, he must know where

he can turn over large quantities of stock at the smallest possible discount.

The authorities have made it rather tough of late for the bankruptcy racketeer to operate, and the lawmakers have cluttered up the statutes with new sets of rules provided with a dozen different kinds of indictments for the hustler caught with the goods. In addition, the trade and daily papers have speared him unmercifully, so much so that the sharpshooter with a past can hardly procure a packet of pins on credit from any of the reputable wholesale houses.

This racket has many angles of a technical nature and there are so many details connected with its operation that it requires anywhere from ninety days to six months in the building up process to insure the final take. But, of course, the racketeer is well repaid for his labor and time, for when the red flag is hung up he generally counts himself ahead in the five or six figure class, the scores running from twenty-five thousand dollars to a sum as high as a quarter of a million dollars.

Let one of the boys himself describe the routine. Consider the spokesman an old timer and his description given you uncensored, right off the lip:

"It's a tough racket now-a-days. The Shommuses have made the good spots too hot, and when you build

up a job for a regular shake the mouthpiece wants to clip you for ninety per cent of the score. After you go into bankruptcy on the make, they'd like to send you through again on the square. And too many mobs have spoiled the racket for the right guys. They take the dive too soon and when the Law steps in for a peek the layout is a dead give away. And besides the D.A.'s are getting hep to the Racket, and horse flies and wised up D.A.'s are hard to fool. When you get ready to take the rap, the fall guy now-a-days looks sure for a stretch, and even if it's only a sixer in the pen, too many sixes are bad for the health.

"The last time I went through I rode for a sixty grand score, but I lost ten pounds ducking pinches on the turn-overs. It looks as though every harness dick in the precinct was next to the racket and every time the fence hauled away a load he imagined he was getting a tail from the Burns men, the "Eyes" and a half dozen headquarters dicks. Those mugs are naturally nervous on every job and they get the shakes even with a bona fide bill of sale in their kick.

"I took a flier in silk on the last deal and clipped about fourteen wholesale houses for nice orders. I nursed them along though for nearly six months and they had me in the bag for nearly ten G's before I pulled the string and let the joint go blooey. When

they came around to give the place the once over, they couldn't locate enough assets to fill the mouthpiece of a telephone. I sent in a squawk about a midnight robbery, cracked up a few windows and knocked off the locks on a few closets, but every one was hep to the deal and they were welcome to everything they could find. One of the mob took the fall, a bird with a clean record, and I wasn't in on the play anyhow, for they all had me pegged for other jobs, but when the crash came they naturally hooked me up with the deal on general principles. If the law tagged me with every job they knew I was in on, I'd be a lammister from now on.

"We started off in a decent sized hole in the wall down on the East Side. You could get a fair amount of stock in the slab, but we told the salesmen we kept the bulk of our stock in the store room. They thought we were selling to the sweatshops, doing a little retail business on the side at the main joint. Anyhow a salesman doesn't care who you sell to as long as you buy from him.

"We swapped a few checks to give a good bankfront in case the suckers would send the rating agencies after us, so we were well covered on that end. And when we opened up the store it looked enough on the up-and-up to get by, for we borrowed enough stock

from another mob to fill the shelves, and when the first salesman came along we looked like ready money with a corking future.

"This egg represented a house in Jersey and we gave him a pretty good order. He couldn't see anything less than a ten-day call for dough, so we accepted it on that basis. The same day we placed two other orders, one for fifteen days and the other, a small one, for thirty.

"We had a plant all located for the stuff and it never left the sidewalk in front of the joint. As soon as the truck dropped the bundles, we loaded them on another, telling the driver we were sending them to the store room. We sold it right off the bat at a loss of twenty per cent. You see we were getting it wholesale and with the twenty off for the fence, he was getting a gilt-edge bargain. He naturally had it sold also, probably to one of the city's high class stores, for no one passes up the real goods at a good buy.

"By the time the bill was due from the first sale, we had turned over more than enough junk to pay it and we gave the house a bigger order with a little more time allowed us. By this time we were increasing orders and buying from more than a dozen firms, always paying the bills as they arrived with the money we collected on sales just previous. In other words

we were robbing Peter to pay Paul and taking it from Charlie to pay Peter, at the same time selling the stuff we bought from Mike to meet Charlie's bill. And so on down the line so that our buys and sells were making a regular circle.

"When we had the business going along nicely and the firms felt sure of us, so that they would fill almost any order without getting leery, and we could demand anywhere from sixty to ninety days credit, we decided to unload. We had the junk coming to the shop in one load after another, sometimes the trucks being forced to wait till another one backed out. As fast as they dumped the stock, our man picked it up and hauled it away, kicking in on the spot for every dime's worth he carted off.

"When we counted up the final night we figured nearly sixty grand in the clear. And then we waited around a week or two, for we still had a little time before the squawk was due. But before any of the big houses could hop in on us, we had a friendly firm toss us into bankruptcy and the news broke the next day. That was the cue for the suckers to come around and make their belch, and how those birds can scream when they know they are clipped.

"My fall guy had his story right. The night before the joint was prowled and the thieves emptied the

place, backing up a truck apparently. And his ready sugar was all gone. His bank deposits looked regular, for we banked every dime we took in under his name, drawing it out by check in sections. And he told the howling mob he went for his roll on the ponies, or was taken by another racket. It was his dough anyhow and he could do what he liked with it, but of course the rap went through because those mouthpieces know their onions and they can smell the racket the minute they take a peek at the layout.

"Every Shommus on the beat knew we were going South with the stuff, but they couldn't prove it. Our books were all doctored up, and it's a tough thing to prove hidden assets. And a little kind treatment will soften up some Receivers. And if you will look over the records you will find the toughest rap ever registered brought, at tops, a six months' bit. And you'll find mugs all over town willing to do a sixer for ten grand. Some of them would do it standing on their head for half the amount.

"A good mouthpiece can rattle up the works so that you will ease out without any kind of a fall, for bankruptcy has lots of twists, and a good lawyer keeps it in the civil courts and away from the criminal bench. A smart racketeer plays the game carefully so that the rapper hasn't a chance to holler larceny, for one of

his initial moves is to locate a fall guy who has a square past. On the first fall they hardly dare to squeal too loud, for he might sue for damages and double their loss. False arrest costs many hot headed suckers a lot of money and the average house takes the loss with a smile, merely marking a red cross opposite the hustler's monacker, and notifying all their friendly competitors to look out for him in the future.

"Of course, he gets a bad reputation in the trade, but he is well paid for it, and besides you can't eat a good reputation."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PUFF RACKET

One of the most recent invaders in the field of racketeering is listed in the Directory of Bunk as the "Puff Peddler." This illegitimate offspring of an honored profession has sprung into action all over the country, and since his operations are classified as lawful, though obviously of a questionable nature, he is cleaning up a handsome income.

The Puff Peddler brazenly ranks himself as a newspaper man, but in reality he is nothing more than a news scavenger who has borrowed an idea from the old-time scandal sheet, hooked it to one of the many methods employed by the "We Boys" and molded the combination into a racket of his own.

The scandal sheet publisher used his columns as a weapon to extract cash from his victims. His scheme came within the zone of blackmail, since he threatened his quarry with the publication of embarrassing news items unless they bought him off. The Puff Peddler works on exactly opposite lines. His publication is used as bait. He dangles a eulogistic

editorial before the chump and makes him pay to see it in print.

This racket, in a reasonably short time, has developed into quite an industry, for its operation entails the maintenance of a weekly or monthly publication, with its accompanying overhead. But the profits make both the investment and the labor expended well worth while.

The scheme is based on the theory that every one loves to see his or her name in print, and if accompanied by a cleverly constructed puff, will pay well for it, provided the subject is properly approached and the salesman's telephone canvass holds up. The success of the racket depends entirely on the canvass. This spiel must be memorized by the racketeer, nicely primed with light and shade in its rendition, and he must be ready with a smart reply to any query; for in this racket the sucker must be landed on the first call. They never bite the second time.

One of the pioneers in the Broadway zone came originally from Atlantic City. He was an ex-newspaper man who seemed to have the urge for printer's ink, but lacked either the necessary ability or the ambition to follow the game on the up-and-up. Establishing headquarters in a building at Columbus Circle, he became the publisher of The —— Record, back in

1922 or '23. The title was an asset, for it carried the necessary qualities of class and dignity for the racket, and it seemed to fit snugly into the office canvass.

On one side of the main office was a sound proof telephone compartment. Adjoining this, along the side wall, were a half dozen typewriting machines for the rewrite men. In a private office was quartered the publisher, a big, good-natured chap who had a penchant for city room stories and who liked to cackle in the vernacular of the Fourth Estate. He was so good natured, in fact, that he deemed it prudent to engage a business manager to watch the exchequer. The boys in the office used to rush him on quick touches for lunch money; and when business was slow they even tried to pry room-rent money from him, and he hated to refuse.

The business manager was an Englishman. He was rather short, with a long, sharp pointed nose and one of those mustaches that looked like a paint brush dab rather than the real thing. He wore tight fitting clothes and they seemed to make him nervous. He was business manager, efficiency man, purchasing agent, auditor, cashier, office boss and whatever else the Record had, needed or would ever require in the line of man-power with a title. He would growl when a new typewriter ribbon was requested. He would

keep reminding the new rewrite men that the fellows who preceded them on the job were much faster, more accurate and knew how to turn out copy that would sell in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred. If one of the boys dropped a cigarette butt on the floor he would swoop down on it from his high stool like a chicken hawk diving after a stray hen, and, muttering the reprimand the crime called for, he would dash it into the nearest cuspidor. He could get more wrinkles into his forehead than an aged elephant, and when he wasn't playing with his lip decoration, he was prowling the side walls for dirty spots. He had the building porter up on charges eight times a day for not polishing up this or that bit of bright work and he seemed to suffer from inward hemorrhages whenever he noticed a rewrite man crumble up a piece of copy paper, for the double reason that the wreckage cluttered up the waste baskets and it was costly to the house. When a new hired boy approached the chief skipper for a small touch he was referred to the kid with the trick lip. And then all the rewrite men stopped tickling the keys to watch the farce. When the B. M. ended his spiel the poor deluded applicant had the literal definition of a Mexican Stand-Off, *i.e.*, "Forget the money and thank God you're alive."

The Publishing-Managing-Editor would arrive at

headquarters very early, armed with all the daily papers, local trade magazines and other literary junk. He would go right into a huddle with the Business Manager, behind closed doors, checking up on such very important matters as cash on hand and prospects in the bloom, etc., and then the old shears would get busy. In a very few minutes out would come clippings of all kinds, distributed among the rewrite men as leads. A mere five-line note announcing the election of some hitherto unheard of individual to a corporation office of semi-importance assumes the proportion of a perfect score. And what a good rewrite man can do with a five-line lead is nobody's business. The completed article would be handed to the telephone canvass man and he would locate the prospect and endeavor to make the sale. The profits were divided as follows: ten per cent to the rewrite man, fifteen per cent to the phone salesman.

The story I have to tell is of one of his employees who was a former reporter just discharged from an uptown sanitarium where he had gone to rid himself of a small menagerie of weird animals that seemed to interfere with his sleep. His sojourn in the booze cure had fired him with new ambitions and resulted in the birth of many new ideas. As he listened to the routine of the puff racket, one of his ideas began to howl.

The proprietor of the boozatorium had spent many hours with the reporter, discussing his institution, of which he was justly proud. He went into details anent the secrecy of the sanitarium's activities, how his patients were protected, and this and that and that and this, until the news-grabber would flee, pretending he had suddenly been attacked by a headache. And with the —— Record's racket in mind, he decided to recover the fee charged for the cure and at the same time give the owner of the tremens destroyer the very publicity he was seeking. He sat himself down and wrote a masterpiece. But he wanted to sell it himself, and accordingly arranged that he would personally spill the canvass over the phone, get the order and collect the entire twenty-five per cent for himself.

Getting the principal on the phone the reporter warmed right up to his work. "Good morning, Mr. Brown," said he, "this is the Managing Editor of the —— Record. One of my staff writers has just turned in a rather commendatory editorial on your hospital, and I'd like to read it to you to check up on the details, that is if you have time to hear it just now."

Brown at the other end certainly had time. He assured his caller he would listen attentively. And he did. He heard a eulogy of Brown's Sanitarium, its business system; its method of treatment; its admir-

able record; the views of its founders; the incomparable ability of its staff; the singular honesty of its head; the fact that it was situated almost in mid-town; overlooking Central Park; the most attractive location in North America; the fact that its record of patients was a state secret; the absence of the slightest embarrassment to its inmates; the high-class patronage it boasted of; the absolute cure it had perfected; and so on down the line until dear old Brown must have almost slithered off his swivel chair in ecstasy.

"This editorial really calls for a photograph, Mr. Brown," cheerfully lied the reporter, "but unfortunately we haven't one in our files and since we go to press to-morrow, we'll have to run the article without it. However, I've decided to run it on our editorial page where it will stand out prominently, for it really deserves a preferred position."

When Brown was solicited for corrections, he was flabbergasted. The reporter had not suffered a single interruption of course. Perfect diction, every adjective nicely accented, the rising inflections carefully timed and spotted, his rendition of the blurb would interest a total stranger in Mr. Brown. That gentleman never before dreamed he was so important in the community. Nor did any one else. He bashfully admitted the story was a trifle strong, probably praying in-

wardly the "Managing Editor" would argue that point with him, which he certainly did.

And then followed the canvass.

"You know, Mr. Brown," began the spiel, "our paper is now in its fortieth year. Our circulation is, of course, a private one, that is to say it is not sold over the corner news-stands. Our subscription list includes practically every banking house and brokerage concern in the country, and we reach only those folks interested in the contents of our medium, dealing, as it does, merely with the high spots of commerce, finance, and the big industrial problems. Of course, every public library has the —— Record on file, but we aim to keep our circulation strictly on a class basis. Consequently, as you will doubtless wish some copies of the issue containing this beautiful article about yourself and your institution, I would suggest you order them now and I'll have my circulation manager deliver them to you as soon as they come off the press. I imagine about three hundred copies would be ample for your personal use, or do you think you would care for more for such distribution? On second thought, Mr. Brown, this article, now that I scan it closely, has some tremendous advertising qualities. Since your institution seems to be patronized almost exclusively by business men and those in the upper strata of society,

and since we reach that field in a great measure, perhaps you would care for enough to circularize a certain area, for such an article in a high grade publication like the —— Record is bound to register with the very class of patients you are seeking."

Mr. Brown decided he could use about five hundred. And then he asked what the cost would be. Here the reporter did some lovely cooing, for the sale depended entirely on the balance of the canvass.

"Our price, Mr. Brown, has been the same for the past forty years," he began, "thirty-five cents the copy. You see this may sound prohibitive, but since we are not after general circulation, the sales price is set merely to cover the cost of printing. Beautifully bound and printed on heavy coated stock with a book finish, it is the type of periodical you would naturally place on your library table. And I am sure you will be deeply interested in the illustrations, as well as the text. I am really sorry we can't include your own photograph in this issue, but I'll make sure to get one in in our next."

The price seemed to stagger the good Mr. Brown, but he apparently figured that he needed only two patients at one hundred dollars a week to make the grade and still have twenty-five berries over, for he gave the order, much to the reporter's relief and to

the big boss's joy. For the balance of the afternoon the Englishman acted like a man under an anesthetic. He pointed the reporter out as the star man of the class and used him as an example in arguing with the other hustlers.

All day long the machines were kept busy and the phone salesman kept chattering away. Even the front cover was sold, as well as every other line in the sheet. The only article that didn't carry a cash value was the editorial, a piece of writing copied from a financial paper and rewritten by one of the slaves. Figuring up his sold space, the big boy from the sea shore decided how many pages he wanted and gave the printer his order. The amount printed depended on the amount sold over the phone.

A few days later five hundred copies were delivered, as per order, to Brown's Sanitarium, all wrapped in bundles of one hundred copies each. Brown couldn't even lamp the corner of the periodical until he handed the delivery man the necessary coin. And when he nervously ripped off the wrapping paper he saw five hundred copies of a cheap job, a brown cover, twenty-eight pages of literary rubbish, thrown together, with fillers inserted to even up the columns. Here and there a half-tone picture broke the monotony of the solid text. As a decoration for the library table in

Brown's home, it was a total loss. His housemaid wouldn't even use it to prop up a casterless leg. As a matter of fact, Mr. Brown had the entire cargo cut up into five-inch squares for obvious usage.

At thirty-five cents a cpoy, the racket paid well. It was a sure-fire money-maker until competition clogged up the sucker market. The work is easy and pleasant and the racketeer with a sense of humor, such as the publisher of the —— Record, gets many a kick out of the average sale. There is nothing illegitimate about the proposition and since the scheme only works once in each spot, it promises to endure as long as the Babbitt crop lasts.

Amateur theatrical performances, particularly those in which the principals show the slightest sign of being stage struck, provide a great field for the puff peddler. Here the rewrite man gives his imagination a free rein and his review of the individual's stage work would make the ability of a Mansfield appear amateurish in comparison. The marriage column is closely watched; the smart racketeer naturally figuring the newlyweds will gladly make a purchase to distribute the news among their countless relatives and friends.

All in all this racket is nothing short of an abortion on journalism, but every medium sized city in the country has its own puff sheet and its quota of suckers.

A slight variation of the Puff is known as The Mug Racket. This has been in vogue for many years and is worked in a dozen different ways. The manner of locating a sucker is much the same as that employed by the Puff Racketeer, but in this instance the canvass is a personal one. The hustler visits his man and exhibits faked credentials, showing him to be the accredited representative of various domestic and foreign publications. He advises the man approached that the main office has requested some data concerning his activities and winds up by making a proposition whereby he will publish his picture in several of the papers for a stated fee. Once the cash is passed the sucker neither sees his picture, the publication nor the representative.

Many Who's Who books, dealing with every type of profession and industry, are also used as a means to separate the chronic publicity seeker from his surplus cash. Equipped with printed volumes, the solicitor convinces the selected victim that he cannot afford to be omitted in the forthcoming edition and makes a charge according to the length of the biography desired. Enough copies are printed to cover the number of subscribers and work is immediately begun on a new edition.

CHAPTER XIX

WE BOYS

WHAT a sweet fund of sucker money is extracted from the purse of the unsuspecting public through the illegitimate use of the recognized power of the press!

The profession of journalism offers unlimited scope to the smart racketeer. Many a cash donation is collected daily on city room lingo, and a borrowed or stolen police reporter's card. The period of prosperity for scandal sheets, at least those published in the East, apparently ended when U. S. Judge Julian Mack found the publisher of *Broadway Brevities* guilty on several counts for violating the postal laws. Sentencing him to a term of imprisonment in the Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta, the court ordered immediate suspension of the periodical. This verdict threw a permanent scare into the ranks of that type of racketeer conducting systematic blackmail business with a weekly or monthly publication as principal weapon.

Yet the scandal sheet is only one of many angles by which printer's ink is employed as a background for unlawful operations. The most widely known racket

in this category is operated by scattered mobs called "We Boys." Somewhat hampered by periodical exposure, the scheme still flourishes in the larger cities, although reputable newspaper publishers have done their utmost to stamp it out of existence.

The racket itself is nothing more than a cheap species of panhandling. Those identified with it are generally found to be crooked advertising solicitors, discredited news reporters and plain beggars, gifted with sufficient experience in the newspaper game to be able to converse intelligently in the language of the profession.

A We Boys mob needs but two operators. Their program is simple and seldom varies. And despite the obvious fraud it revolves on, it still works surprisingly well in spots. So well, in fact, that every day some score or more good-natured business men are induced to subscribe to the "burial fund" of some "old-time newspaper man" who is waiting patiently in some speak-easy, around the corner from the donor's office or home, for the messenger to return with the cash or check.

The We Boys keep a carefully compiled list of what are termed "Taps," with the office and residence address and phone numbers. When a man shows a fondness for publicity, or exhibits the slightest interest in members of the newspaper profession, he is promptly

labeled a Tap. Principals in divorce actions, criminal cases and civil suits that procure unusual publicity always provide new Taps for the We Boys.

The touch in this racket is always preceded by a canvass over the telephone. The Tap is reached at his office immediately after lunch, or shortly after dinner if called at home. This time is considered best in order to reach the sucker while he is in good humor.

When called by the racketeer the title of one of the city's daily papers is always used and he doesn't hesitate to announce himself as its publisher, or its managing or city editor. His accomplice puts the call through, announcing to whoever answers the phone the identity of the caller. Such procedure automatically eliminates the necessity of explaining the nature of the call to a stenographer, secretary, servant or business associate. Once assured the Tap is on the wire, the phone is handed over to the man who makes the canvass.

The sucker is warmed up with a query anent his health and directly he is informed of the sudden death of "Harry Hudson" or some such fictitious name, being also advised that Harry was for many years on the staff of the Associated, United or International Press, or it may be on one of the city's prominent dailies. He is also advised that Harry is the chap who covered this

or that story in which he was one of the principal characters. "And," the racketeer continues, "it's a funny thing, but Harry was discussing you only the other day during a fanning bee in the office about the good old days gone by."

This fact, incidentally, is given as a plausible explanation of the current call.

"Yes," he goes on, "good old Harry will never have to worry about the sheet's deadline any more. Too bad the way all the real old timers are dropping off. And Harry was such a crackerjack newspaper man too. And that story of you caused more comment on Park Row than anything Harry had written in the last ten years. Too bad, yes, indeed."

The Tap, of course, can't quite place good old Harry, but to admit as much to the editor would hardly be diplomatic. He is sincerely sorry to hear of Harry's death. Who wouldn't be with such a prominent editor on the other end of the wire, his voice breaking and almost on the verge of tears?

And then, walking right into the racketeer's trap, he inquires when the funeral will take place. Here the We Boy touches off his heavy artillery.

It seems that poor old Harry left a wife and four lovely little kiddies. He neglected the important matter of insurance during life, and like all newspaper men

he never saved a penny. And now the funeral is but two days off and Harry's family is practically destitute. Then, with a deep sob, he concludes with "We Boys have started a little collection to give him a decent burial and present the widow with a purse after the funeral, and knowing how you felt toward the boys, we thought you might like to make a small donation to help swell the total."

The racketeer rattles off a list of names, adding the amount supposed to have been donated by each, many of whom are known to the sucker, of course, this being an additional convincer to insure the touch. The final speech is merely a suggestion that one of the boys will hasten right up to pick up whatever amount he cares to add to the fund. The accomplice makes the call and should he return with a check, made out to the widow, as suggested during the conversation by the racketeer, it is promptly cashed in a so-called clearing house where all such paper is readily converted into ready cash. These clearing houses are generally operated in conjunction with a speak-easy, the proprietor deducting ten per cent for service. Should the check be stopped, the racketeer guarantees the house against loss. Should an investigation follow, the man who cashes the check covers up the trail by declaring he

accepted it from a customer without questioning its source.

In the event of failure on the initial call, the Tap requesting the racketeer to call him later, he is listed then as a "Call Back." Many Taps become suspicious and decide to telephone the newspaper mentioned to confirm the death. In this case the We Boys generally pass him up entirely. A Call Back is dangerous and there is always that possibility of a trap with the charge of Receiving Money Under False Pretenses made against the messenger. But there are generally sufficient Taps available to fall on the initial call, and from these the We Boys, mongrels of the racketeer pack, eke out an existence.

CHAPTER XX

MATCHING COINS

OCCASIONALLY one reads in the daily papers of some visitor from the rural districts having squandered his life's savings matching coins with strangers. One wonders how another with common sense could be inveigled into such a game with strangers, and particularly since that racket has received as much, if not more, publicity than the old Gold Brick game which flourished back in the eighties. The racket of matching coins is quite as old as the Gold Brick, but despite its age, and the fact that every now and then some ambitious reporter devotes a column or two of space in exposing the game, it still clicks with consistent regularity, every week bringing a fresh crop of suckers who will gamble their bankrolls on the toss of a coin, of course, having been assured that they are destined to be on the winning end without fail, with their opponent marked as the chump.

The coin-matching racket requires two operators, one to steer the sucker and the other to play the rôle of a fool. The characters impersonated are selected to fit the neighborhood in which the racket is worked.

Every one likes to think he is a trifle smarter than every one else, and working on this story the steerer permits his mark to believe he is playing the rôle of expert trimmer himself, while the racketeer assumes the part of a dumb-bell.

The men generally work in a night club, speak-easy, pool room, bowling alley, hotel lobby, restaurant, or, in fact, any place where transient visitors are liable to congregate. As a racket, mating coins is classed as pure petit larceny, the hustlers seasoning their work with just a dash of intelligence, gambling on the chance that the victim will take his loss like a good sport and not holler "Copper" when he realizes he has been clipped. They also figure that since he was knowingly playing a part in a crooked game himself, he will hesitate before going to the authorities with a complaint. But since the average sucker is just a plain fool, he invariably goes to the nearest police station, where he is told step by step just how he behaved from the time he met the racketeers, and likely as not shown a photograph of the pair. Consequently the police records show an average of two or three weekly raps, registered by as many unsuspecting chumps who figured they could outsmart the other fellows, only to lose their bankrolls and their new acquaintances at the same time.

The steerer first becomes acquainted with his man in the usual way,—asking the right time; requesting a match; or calling him by some name, giving the impression that he believed he had met him somewhere before. Once a conversation is opened the steerer works fast. A round of drinks seals the acquaintance, the steerer advising his man that he just arrived in town after closing some big deal. He is well supplied with ready cash, and blessed with a pleasing personality—as all racketeers must be to be successful—the pair are soon on friendly terms.

Then enters the racketeer, appropriately attired for the rôle he is to assume. He might come with baggy trousers, clothes all out of date, acting like a farmer in town for a good time. He might be an immigrant with a slight dialect, or he might choose the rôle of a flip traveling salesman, even bringing his sample case with him. He is a trifle loud in talk and supposedly half drunk. He approaches the pair and invites them to drink with him. His invitation develops into a command when the steerer at first politely refuses, obviously annoyed by the intrustion. But the racketeer insists and finally suggests they match to see who pays for the round, plainly challenging his gameness and even insinuating that he is too cheap to take the chance.

The steerer whispers to his friend that he will match

for one drink to get rid of the pest and they toss coins, the steerer winning, while the racketeer pays for the drinks, exhibiting at the same time a roll of bank notes in which bills of large denomination are plainly visible. At this time the racketeer excuses himself for a moment and retires to the wash room, adding as he exits, that he will get even on the next round.

Once out of the room the steerer suggests to the sucker that they trim this loud mouthed intruder, taking his money and teaching him a badly needed lesson at the same time. He explains the game of odd-man-wins, whereby all three uncover coins, and where there are two heads and a tail exposed the man holding the latter wins the pot, or vice versa. The steerer at the same time asks how much money the sucker holds, learning the amount possible for them to win from him. He also arranges a set of signals by which the sucker will understand when to turn up head or tail on his coin, thus insuring them against any possible chance of loss. For instance, he will hold his cigarette in the left side of his mouth to call for a head and in the right side for a tail. By watching his mouth the sucker will know just which side of the coin to uncover. And he finally instructs him to meet him at an appointed spot on the outside a few minutes after the game is over to divide the spoils, intimating that by the signal system

he will arrange it so that the sucker will win all the money.

The racketeer returns just as they complete arrangements, having made his entrance at a sign from the steerer, and another round of drinks is ordered and matched for, the steerer winning again. One of the pair then suggest a three handed game, to permit the sucker a chance to get into action. This, of course, is agreeable to the other chap and from matching for drinks they proceed to match for dollar bills. The sucker is permitted to win several games when the ante is tilted. The game swings from one to the other and eventually the stakes are raised to what they consider a safe limit. Now the steerer proceeds to win three of every four games and he soon is holding the bulk of the money. But the sucker suspects nothing, for the signals are working in perfect order and his partner is well in front of the game.

Finally the sucker's last dollar is up and this also goes to the steerer, whereupon the racketeer decides he has had enough, or for the sake of appearances agrees to match once for all he has. If he does, the steerer wins this game also and now has the combined wealth of all three. After purchasing a round of drinks, he winks to the sucker and leaves the room, it being previously understood they would meet on the outside.

A few minutes later the sucker excuses himself to join his "partner," but the latter is nowhere to be found. A return visit to the scene of the game finds the racketeer among the missing also.

And unless the sucker is entirely dead from the collar up, he begins to realize he has been caught in the middle of a squeeze play and taken for his wad.

CHAPTER XXI

DICE CHEATERS

THE dice racketeer operates in many ways. And, like the pool shark, he is always anxious to fleece one of his own calling. A crooked dice manipulator would hardly net daily expenses were he to depend on unsophisticated victims, for the racket consumes too much time in the process of readying up a sucker for a killing and the amateur crap shooter quickly becomes suspicious and seldom goes for a heavy loss.

But the semi-smart dice player is a choice mark for the racketeer who knows all the angles of the game; consequently this is a racket where the big fish continually devour the smaller fry, thus keeping the money in general circulation among themselves.

The principal stock in trade of a dice man is good working capital. And when a dice hustler is snared for a trimming there is no question about the possible profit, for the victim is always well supplied with currency. Always imagining he is on the right side of the gamble, he must be armed with sufficient cash to cover

any wager that might be hazarded by the opposition; and when a dice cheater is clipped, he usually goes for his last dollar on a single roll of the cubes. There is no oral betting in a game of craps, for the amount of the play must be in sight on the board before the dice leave the player's hands.

Dice racketeers keep continually on the move. Once their racket becomes generally known their income stops. The average professional dice player will not risk his money unless he is confident he has a large percentage in his favor; and to give the cheater this confidence and still take his money is somewhat difficult, yet done repeatedly and still being done. One system, of the many introduced around Broadway, proved highly successful and profitable to a pair of hustlers, who managed to trim a score of less intelligent cheaters before the game was played out and they repaired to new territory for fresh clients.

This scheme was worked by a pair of Philadelphia sharpshooters, one impersonating a small town business man and the other a smart city gambler. The latter, known only by the name of "Sax" around the street, played the rôle of steerer, his part requiring neither make-up nor rehearsal. He suddenly made his appearance around the Broadway places where dice men assemble, made the acquaintance of a number of hustlers

who specialized in dice work and let it become generally known that he was a cheater himself, ready and willing to participate in any racket that would pay dividends. He diplomatically collected the required data on the wealth of the various racketeers and finally selected one of the more prosperous members of the colony as his initial victim.

All this preliminary work required patience and much time. But "Sax" played his part well and never gave any of his new acquaintances the slightest opportunity to become suspicious of his intentions. He warmed up his man in the usual way and eventually demonstrated his rare ability with a pair of dice, exhibiting his private supply of crooked cubes and, after winning the confidence of his victim, offered to declare him in on a proposition that promised to net the pair $10,000. "Sax" advised his new "partner" that he had a small town sucker lined up and assured him they could relieve him of his entire fortune in a single play. He explained that the chump he had in mind was a banker in a small town upstate who liked to week-end occasionally in the city, and after spending the night around the town, invariably wound up the visit with a fling at the dice.

It was further explained that the sucker always carried his cash in a grouch bag, suspended from his neck

and tucked away beneath his shirt. He added, though, that he carried current expenses in addition and only went to the grouch bag when his pocket cash was exhausted. He also declared he had clipped the small town man for small amounts on several occasions, priming him up for one big score. For this he needed assistance, for a two-handed game might arouse his suspicions, and besides the necessary switch in dice during the game could be made much easier through the aid of an accomplice.

"Sax" then exhibited a telegram signed by the man in question and marked from the town mentioned. In this wire he advised the steerer he expected to spend the current week-end in the city and would probably arrive the following day. A plan was framed to arrange the introduction of the confederate and the pair rehearsed the details necessary for the expected score.

The next night found "Sax" and his small town banker friend at dinner in an appointed restaurant. And just as the coffee was being served the Broadway cheater sauntered toward them, apparently having just finished his meal at another table. Greeting the steerer as an old friend he hadn't seen in months, he was induced to join them. The usual conversation ensued, following his introduction to the upstate man, but of course no mention of a game was made. After dinner

the three decided to take in a musical comedy, after which they spent the late hours of the night at a popular night club. The expenses were all met by the Broadway cheater, who explained he just reached town from the West and was only too glad to be favored with the company of his old friend "Sax" and the upstate banker.

They finally came to the visitor's hotel and once in his room "Sax" cleverly introduced the dice. He and the Broadway cheater began by throwing for high number, but the upstate man soon joined them, and shortly a regular game of craps was in progress. But the visitor advised them he might not be able to continue as long as he wished to, for he expected a long distance telephone call from home that might necessitate his immediate departure.

The game continued and soon the rural gent had lost his ready supply of cash. Excusing the action he partially disrobed and brought forth the grouch bag, just as predicted by "Sax." With this move the Broadway hustler's eyes brightened with satisfaction, for the wad of bank notes was encased in a brand new $1,000 bill with others of large denomination in plain sight. Extracting two or three $100 notes the upstate man returned to the play. But the action was soon interrupted by the jingle of the phone bell. This hap-

pened just as the guest had promised to wager $200 on his next roll of the dice. After a short conversation, obviously on a long distance wire, the man returned to inform his friends that he must return home at once and the game would have to be continued on his next visit to the city. Hastily packing his hand bag, he checked out of the hotel and was hustled off to the depot in a taxicab by his two companions.

During their return ride to Broadway the pair checked up their cash and found they had won approximately $100 in cash from their sucker. They bemoaned their ill luck, cursing the long distance phone call for the interruption of what promised to result in a gigantic haul. But "Sax" comforted his Broadway friend, assuring him that the sucker would return soon. And for the next several days, they fraternized, discussing their plans and going over details that might come in handy on the subsequent play.

As expected, "Sax" displayed another telegram from the upstate chump, advising him of his contemplated visit to the city the next day. The wire mentioned the Broadway racketeer, promising them both a good time upon the sender's arrival. The following night the trio ventured forth again, going to the theater first and, as formerly, winding up the party at a local night club.

But this time it was arranged that all three would

come to "Sax's" apartment, where he declared he had some good liquor and where they could do as they wished without complaint or interruption. This was located in a dark street on the West Side of the city, somewhere in the Fifties. It was merely a furnished apartment, rented solely for the operation of the racket. After a few drinks the game was started and before it had progressed far the sucker was reaching for his grouch bag. Here "Sax" worked in a pair of loaded dice, the move being made so that the Broadway racketeer would witness it and gauge his betting accordingly. This meant "Sax" would be on the winning side, but since the pair were working on a fifty-fifty basis, it mattered little which of the two took the money. Besides it would hasten matters and should there be a squawk from the sucker it would fall on "Sax" and not the boy from Broadway.

The upstate sucker contributed his money in large sums, and to make the play look natural, the Broadway hustler added his fortune to "Sax's" winning pile. The game developed of course into a one-sided affair with "Sax" doing a solo on the right side of the board, and eventually it came down to the final wager which called for all the money in sight. The grouch bag was emptied, and the Broadway racketeer, too, was tapped for his last penny. But he showed little concern,

knowing that his money was as good as banked while his confederate was holding it. And he began to mentally figure his end of the winnings, for the rural visitor had dropped at least $15,000 or $20,000 during the night's play.

With a few additional tosses "Sax" registered his point and pocketed the combined losses of the two other players. And he promptly folded the small fortune into one bundle, and pocketed it so that both his companions saw exactly where it was placed.

And then followed the climax cue, the move that completed the manipulation of the well-staged racket. The upstate man suggested they step out to a chop suey restaurant for a bite to eat. This motion was seconded by the Broadway hustler, for it would keep "Sax" in sight and prevent the disappearance of any of the ill-earned spoils. They descended to the street hallway whereupon the unexpected awakening of the small town banker took place. Being an early morning hour the street was naturally deserted, and since the house, as aforementioned, was carefully selected for this portion of the melodrama, the vestibule was cloaked in semi-darkness. Whirling upon "Sax" with a gun pressed against his body, the upstate sucker declared he was aware of the crooked work done by the pair and merely waited until the proper time to re-

trieve his lost fortune. Threatening to kill either of them if they moved, he reached down and quickly extracted the roll of bills from "Sax's" pocket, transferring it to his own. Ordering them both to retreat up the stairs and with a promise to shoot if they dared follow him, he vanished up the street.

"Sax," allowing him sufficient time to turn the nearest corner, promptly started to follow, while the Broadway racketeer stood rooted to the spot. Had the latter attempted to join the chase "Sax" would have suddenly turned to warn him back, thus assuring the escape of the sucker, with the combined bankrolls of the three and with the harmless gun.

But this particular racketeer didn't follow. Nor would any smart racketeer. A harness copper approached the door and inquired the cause of the excitement and the Broadway boy merely answered, "Oh a couple of drunks are playing tag." But he didn't realize that he had been elected "It" for several hours.

Strange as it may seem, a dice hustler is not easiiy convinced that any one is smarter than himself, at his own racket.

CHAPTER XXII

THE TAT

THE Tat is the tool of the unskilled dice hustler, being an exceptionally small dice on which only the numbers, four, five and six appear. The Tat Racket is one of the first ever introduced by hustlers in the dice line, but despite its age, it is still popular. Every new generation provides the Tat Racketeer with a fresh crop of suckers, consequently the racket, like the seven-year locust, has its periodical inning in all parts of the country.

The Tat is utilized by dice hustlers who are either too stupid or too lazy to master the soft and hard dice roll or the combinations that go with them, making it reasonably easy to throw any desired point. Nor can they manipulate the table plant, the method by which a player can toss a high or low number on one of the dice as needed, which is done by a natural twist of the hand in rolling out the cubes, one sliding out to show a four, five or six, if the point be eight, nine or ten, or an ace, deuce or three spot, should the point be four or five.

The Tat mob generally consists of two operators, a man and woman who work together as a rule. The latter does the steering, and with the aid of the man, most of the cheating, thus minimizing the chances of a squawk. For the Tat is only one degree above actual larceny, and can be easily detected, and it would naturally call for a complaint when the victim's eyes are opened to the steal.

The ideal locale for a Tat job is in a restaurant or night club. About the time the Broadway supper clubs and prominent restaurants introduced the couvert charge to their meal checks, the Tat was getting its twentieth-century outing and one could casually stroll through most any of the Broadway dining places and see a half dozen Tat mobs busily engaged with a promising chump on the other side of the table.

As in all sure-rackets, the sucker is first located and then steered to the spot selected for the game. A good-looking girl will meet the chump, in one way or another, and date him up for the evening. An evening at the theater will be followed by a trip to the night club for a bite to eat. Just as the check is due, the racketeer will appear on the scene. The girl invites him to join the party, with the permission of her escort, to whom he is introduced as her employer, brother-in-law or the

husband of her girl friend. He orders a round of drinks, perhaps two or three.

When the sucker looks ready for the killing the Tat is introduced. Perhaps the waiter, hovering near the table, suddenly spies a miniature dice on the floor and placing it on the table inquires if any one present had dropped it. Or the girl might notice it at the sucker's feet. At any rate the little cube is now in the party and is passed around for inspection. This has all the numbers on it, from one to six. The girl suddenly evinces a desire to play with it. The racketeer is apparently not interested. But the obliging sucker generally shows a willingness to gamble for a nickel a toss for high number, merely to satisfy the little girl. The stakes are raised and the racketeer joins the game. Finally he suggests they roll to see who pays the check. The sucker naturally vetoes such a suggestion, but the girl insists it is all right and they finally agree to do so. This, at least, shows a nice spirit of generosity on the part of the racketeer.

This brings in the Tat. The girl insists she is lucky and asks her boy friend's permission to roll for him. In her right hand she has the dice originally found on the floor. In her left hand she has another, an exact duplicate, but carrying but three numbers, an ace, deuce and three spot. She rolls first and tosses this

dice toward the racketeer. Naturally it registers one of those numbers. And as the hustler picks it up in his right hand, he deftly palms it, tossing out the Tat which he had concealed up between his thumb and forefinger. This registers either a four, five or six and naturally wins the toss. As the Tat rolls across the table, the girl quickly picks it up, ready to throw out the cube carrying all the numbers, from one to six, if called for.

With the check paid, the game then continues, at the girl's suggestion, with cash at stake. She may choose the sucker as her opponent, or she might roll the dice for him, with the racketeer covering his bet. But regardless of the manner worked, the sucker is always betting against a sure thing, for except when he is permitted to win, his number never goes above three, while his opponent never rolls below four.

One wonders, with this explanation, why the sucker doesn't examine the cube, since it carries a double set of each number from one to three. Looking directly at it from any angle, he can only see one of the numbers, and the girl generally times her conversation to keep his mind occupied on a reply when he might start examining. And between tosses the racketeer always tosses the honest cube on the table, with the six

spot upward, thus automatically throwing the sucker off guard.

When the chump has gone for the expected limit, the racketeer always manages a graceful exit, either by a prearranged telephone call, or by suddenly remembering an important appointment. And he invariably leaves behind the cube with the six numbers on it, as a souvenir for the chump to take home with him.

Should you ever be one of a party where the waiter, or one of the members suddenly discovers an innocent looking dice in the immediate vicinity, and tosses it over the table for your inspection, don't look at him suspiciously. Just pat your companion on the back and playfully chirp "Tat, Tat, You're It," and watch some one suddenly take the air.

CHAPTER XXIII

PARLOR HIJACKING

On the theory that money easily earned is just as easily lost, the bootlegger is marked as soft picking for the smart racketeer. Because of his semi-respected but nevertheless unlawful calling, he is preyed upon by every species of grafter, from the highway hijacker to the copper with itching palms. The bootlegger has no one to listen to his squeal when he is jerked through the eye of a racketeer's needle; for the law refuses aid in the recovery of contraband goods and when he gets on the wrong end of a business deal he must simply take his medicine—and like it!

The up-to-date bootlegger has weathered about all the shake-down rackets ever devised. He has learned how to dodge the majority, but when he is outsmarted by one of his own ilk, he seldom emits a roar. And he doesn't tip off his competitors, for he dislikes being rated as a sucker, and once trimmed himself, he rather enjoys the aspect of seeing a business rival treated to the same dose.

The two common enemies of the bootlegger are the

hijacker and the law. He has organized to fight the former with his own weapons and the latter is either avoided or bought off. And when a bootlegger greases the palm of an obliging copper, he generally knows where his money is going and procures all the protection promised for it.

During the summer of 1928 a smart bunch of Western racketeers arrived on Broadway and when they departed for parts unknown, they took with them nearly a quarter of a million dollars' worth of the finest liquor in the city. This mob used modern business methods in the operation of their scheme, and so well was their racket worked that the booze was literally forced upon them, with the victim doing most of the work in every instance. The only things utilized were plenty of well-framed conversation, a gilt-edged front, a small cash investment and the proper background for the presentation of the farce.

Arriving in town the racketeer selected one of the prominent Broadway night clubs as his headquarters. Here he spent as much time as he could, making nightly appearances, either alone or with a small party. He was a reasonably liberal spender and always took good care of the head waiter. Occasionally he would receive phone calls, posing as a stockbroker or the owner of some business. In this way he became known to the

club's attachés. For about two weeks he patronized this club exclusively, while others of the mob were going through a similar performance in other Broadway clubs.

The bootlegger who had been selected as the initial victim was reached through an introduction. Any bootlegger can be reached through a possible sale, provided he is sure of his money. In this instance a case of Scotch was purchased, at market prices. A few days later another case was bought, the racketeer advising the bootlegger he knew where a big sale could be made, provided the stuff was genuine. He proceeded to explain that he had a friend in the night club game who was in the market for a large order to stock up a new club he intended opening, and in which he was interested himself, but he wanted only the real, uncut stuff, even if it might cost a bit more than the market price.

Could the bootlegger fill the order? Of course he could. He could supply the new customer with anything desired. That, of course, went without saying, for his ability to do just that very thing had been carefully investigated by the mob before he was ever approached. And to ease his mind on the financial angle, he was told the customer would probably pay in advance, or most assuredly immediately upon delivery. But the stock must be the best obtainable.

It was then explained that the prospective buyer was

a very busy man and had to be approached with care. The matter of an appointment would be taken care of by the racketeer, who promised to notify the bootlegger at the earliest possible moment. He was thus primed to make the biggest sale of his career, and, to the racketeer's satisfaction, was gradually approaching the proper state of mind to be clipped for a score.

A few days later the racketeer "accidentally" met his bootlegger friend on the street. The meeting was nicely timed, for of course he had tailed him for a block or two and then made the necessary detour to make the meeting appear natural. At the same moment the prospective buyer headed direct for the scene of operations, the night club in which he had established himself as a good fellow. Arriving there he advised the head waiter that he expected a few friends and requested a table in the rear, or a booth where they wouldn't be annoyed.

Meanwhile the racketeer had opened up the subject of the sale and nonchalantly suggested they walk over to the club to discuss it with the buyer. Arriving there they were directed to the proper spot where the big order man was busy perusing an account book which he had brought with him in a brief case; and a pen and a bottle of ink, borrowed from the head waiter, adorned the table.

The introduction over, both the bootlegger and his new customer went right into a business huddle. The latter acted exactly as one would expect the owner of a prosperous club to act on his own premises. He opined that he could use some stuff, but only if it were guaranteed, for the trade he expected in the new place would never accept anything but the real McCoy. He would be interested in some Scotch, Rye, Brandy, Champagne, Crème de Menthe, Absinthe,—in fact every brand of drinkable fluid that goes with a modern well-stocked night club. He suggested that some samples be delivered to his friend—the racketeer—and he would hear from him, favorably or otherwise, in a few days.

The bootlegger was indeed interested. The deal was now getting red hot. The bootlegger had absolute confidence in his stock and concluded the deal would be as good as closed once the samples were tested. That very evening the samples were delivered to the racketeer, small bottles containing a few ounces of each brand likely to interest the club owner.

Then came a three-day wait with the bootlegger's nerves bouncing up and down every time his phone bell jingled. Each day the racketeer would phone and stall off the matter of the essential conference for the order. The club owner was exceptionally busy, opening his new place, arranging for furniture and fixtures, get-

ting his revue into rehearsal and attending to the countless other details that accompany a club opening.

Finally the bootlegger was told to come to the club where he originally met the big order man. With the racketeer he arrived there just as the prospective customer was making his exit, but in sufficient time to hear him give the head waiter some instructions about something or other, and to note the latter's apparent willingness to oblige.

Meeting the two visitors he suggested they go to a nearby restaurant, adding that he didn't care to discuss business of this nature in his own place. Once seated he acted just as a big order man would be expected to. He haggled over prices, knew as much about the market scale as did the bootlegger, talked familiarly of the proof of this or that bonded stock, and frankly told him the sample of brandy he submitted was rotten. The others, however, were evidently what he wanted and he lost little time in placing his order. He wanted a hundred cases of one brand; fifty of another and so on down the line until his purchase amounted to a figure touching $50,000. With a fine flourish he extracted from his pocket a wad of yellow bills that resembled a French roll in size, and, peeling off a $500 bank note, tossed it to the bootlegger, advising him that it was to be applied to the purchase. With the same easy-going manner he told him

the balance would be paid on delivery, or better still, the bootlegger could stop at the club for it as soon as it was delivered. And then, after giving him the address of a place uptown where the stock was to be sent, he laughed off the suggestion that he take a receipt for the $500 just paid and, bidding his new friend farewell, strutted off to attend to some important matter pertaining to the forthcoming opening.

With the confidence of a laborer depositing his wages in a Federal Reserve Bank, the bootlegger delivered the order as directed within the hour of the appointed time. Told to stop downtown and get his money, he was hardly out of sight when the booze was loaded on other trucks and deposited miles away from the city. And if you have ever visited a Broadway night club in search of the proprietor, you have an idea of that bootlegger trying to find his customer.

Others of the mob worked along identical lines and the city was thoroughly covered in less than six weeks. Where cash was demanded at the garage, the owner suddenly appeared with a certified check, carrying the name of the night club where the meetings were held printed across the top. This was just a good piece of forgery and the presence of the prosperous looking club owner awed the most skeptical into leaving his small fortune in wet goods behind.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE INTERSTATE SHAKE

BACK in the days before Prohibition awakened an ordinarily sober nation to its actual thirst, some almanac staff writer penned the phrase, "Where there are many laws, there are many thieves." That particular penman must have been at the wrong end of a racket when he conceived that thought, for the introduction of every new law automatically starts the machinery of Racketland in action, and before the authorities have become acquainted with the rules for its enforcement, the racketeers have perfected a scheme to utilize it safely to their financial advantage.

When the Mann Act first became a Federal law the authorities lost little time in bringing to the bar of justice innumerable white slavers and others who aided in the transportation of women across the various state lines for immoral purposes. The accompanying publicity, originally intended to paralyze those who were active in commercialized vice, armed the racketeer with just the weapon he desired to commercialize the law. The details of each trial were broadcast over

the country and the sentences following conviction were of sufficient terms to prevent the culprit from further participation in crime, since his release from prison would bring with it old age.

Shortly after the introduction of the Mann Act, a mob of smart Broadway hustlers assembled to discuss the possibilities of using it as a safe means of shaking down, for large sums, wealthy persons who might be indiscreet enough to gamble with the statute on the chance of not being detected. This mob comprised some of the smartest racketeers of the street, numbering in all about a half dozen, but every one a past masteer in his own specialty.

To seek out the violators of the law meant too much work for this gentry of the land of rackets, consequently they devised ways and means of providing voluntary violators: men who could not afford to be compromised and who would gladly pay the ransom demanded to avoid arrest and prevent the inevitable nation-wide publication of their indiscretions and predicaments, and for whom, besides, the possibility of imprisonment in a Federal penitentiary for many years was expected to hasten a decision to accede to whatever the mob decided to demand.

Each member of the mob was given a specific part to play in this little dramatic comedy. Every man

had his rôle to enact at the psychological moment, speed being the chief requisite for success, with every set speech cued by its predecessor. The mob was divided, three playing the parts of Federal agents, one that of a newspaper reporter, another doing lookout duty and the last acting as stage director. Fake badges were easily acquired, as well as forged warrants and handcuffs, and all other essential paraphernalia were on hand to complete the picture.

With the mob organized and well rehearsed in their respective parts, connections were made to locate the choice of the season's sucker crop. Every racketeer had his woman, and the ladies of the mob are quite as useful at times as the racketeers themselves. In this racket they formed the connecting rod of the link. To them was entrusted the most important portion of the operation, that of priming up the sucker for the big score.

The girls must necessarily be charmers. Their forte was sex appeal and the ability to make it click quickly and with a lasting impression on their selected victim. They must register an air of respectability, for the men picked for the opposite rôle of sucker would hardly be expected to nod to an obvious prostitute. Theirs was an extremely difficult task; for the racket was merely a modernized badger game, and its success

depended primarily on the manner in which they first interested the chump.

The racketeers used various methods to locate their quarry, watching the society columns of the papers, becoming intimate with hotel clerks and head waiters and patronizing the supper clubs to get a direct line on careless husbands. The market abounded with prospective clients for the boys, for out-of-town buyers were arriving daily, all amenable to suggestions for hot parties; and the local roster of wealthy suckers with loose morals promised to keep them active for years to come. Properly staged the racket looked like easy work and easier money, and such it proved to be.

With the chump located in one of the big hotels, the moll, selected to "make" him, was registered in the same hostelry, in a room as close as could be arranged to that occupied by him. Dressed in the latest fashions and stunning to the *n*th degree, she lost little time in becoming acquainted with the sucker. Without presuming in the least to be forward, she managed to force an invitation to dinner from her new boy friend to seal the friendship. Here she loaded him up with tales of her private life, telling him she was either married to an invalid or to a man she couldn't get along with. His sympathy and passion were generally aroused simultaneously. But this moll had her part

to play and she was in no hurry to stage the climax.

Their meetings thereafter were frequent and at such times she contrived to learn as much as possible about the man's personal and family affairs, visiting him in his room if convenient—and safe—to get a general view of its contents or such things as might later be useful to the mob.

Meanwhile the racketeers were busy setting the stage in a hotel in some city of an adjacent state. Working between New York and Philadelphia principally, they soon made connections at either end whereby they could maneuver the dramatic moment of the play much to their own convenience. With everything set for the fireworks at the other end, the lady of the mob was advised to pull the final string that would release the contents of John Sap's bill fold.

Accordingly, at a subsequent meeting, she had little to do but acquiesce to his semi-veiled entreaty to indulge in an illicit love affair. With a bit of well-feigned reluctance she would admit that she was smitten by his manly charms, and otherwise, as well, build the sucker up for a perfect score. But her plan of action necessitated certain reservations. Her reputation must be protected. Their affair must be cloaked in secrecy, and under no circumstances would she be a party to illicit intercourse in that particular city.

By this time the chump's blood pressure has reached the point where he would blow the cap from the thermometer, and he is ready to go to the other end of the country to accomplish what he has been planning for a fortnight. Consequently when the baby doll suggests Philadelphia he is for taking the first train out.

With their baggage consisting of nothing more than some hand luggage, the couple arrive at the depot. And as the chump purchases the transportation for both, the lady of the mob nervously points out a chap who she alleges was looking over his shoulder as he bought the tickets. But John Sap hastily allays her fears, putting them down as natural nervousness because of this being—as she claimed—her first exploit of its kind.

Arriving at their destination, little time is lost in registering at a hotel as man and wife. On the way over the girl conveniently remembers having stopped at just the hotel for the purpose and the sucker is led directly there. At this point the moll could hook a ring in his nose and lead him to the edge of perdition without the slightest resistance from him. Should they arrive during the day the girl keeps his mind off the race by window shopping around the town, or talking him into taking her to a matinée. The curtain

on their play must never ascend until after nightfall.

At the appointed time the pair finally retire to their room, which is located—by arrangement—a few doors away from the one in which the racket mob has assembled. Their operations are not scheduled to begin until some time later. What goes on behind the door of the "bridal chamber" depends on the ingenuity of the "bride," at least until she flashes the signal agreed on for the boys to make their entrance.

This is easily and quickly accomplished by forcing the door lock, and where the door shows evidence of stout resistance, the racket moll attends to its adjustment before signaling the mob to go into action. And, as they enter, the girl promptly and audibly recognizes the man in front as the same one she pointed out to the chump in the New York railway station. That racketeer takes this as the cue to exhibit his phoney Federal agent's badge, at the same time instructing the badly frightened sucker to arise and don his street clothes preparatory to a walk to the nearest police station. And the same order is gruffly aimed at the seemingly hysterical lady.

Their luggage is searched, likewise the man's clothes, while he is listening to the contents of a forged warrant charging him with violation of the Mann Act. To make him a trifle more receptive to this part of

the program, he is prodded, none too gently, in the ribs with a blackjack by one of the mob, and as he is dressing, he intermittently learns that the best break he can look for in court, with the evidence they have against him, is twenty years at hard labor. His thoughts automatically revert to home and family, while the racket moll is tearfully visualizing the manner in which her husband will receive the news of her indiscretion.

And then enters the trick reporter. He comes, with pad in hand, to get some of the spicy particulars, adding that his camera man is downstairs waiting to get a picture of the prisoners. He finally takes the sucker aside for some questions, during which time he suggests, in a whisper, that he might try and fix the coppers and avoid the notoriety and natural consequences of a pinch. The sucker grasps at this suggestion much as a drowning man goes for a life preserver. And the reporter, to make things more binding, offers to talk it over with the coppers to see if a proposition can't be made acceptable to them.

Right at that moment the sucker is willing to submit to any proposition. He has the young lady to think of, and for fear he might forget her for a single moment, she is on her knees begging him to do something to save her from this terrible disgrace. And the

minute the sucker shows a willingness to bargain, he is hooked for life. The racketeers have a line on his financial standing and drive their bargain accordingly. Others—presumably their superiors—must be greased, and the prize must be worth while, for them to gamble with their liberty and their reputations. They know their man, and, without hesitation, proceed to tell him all about himself. This information came from the lady of the mob and only such as they are convinced is true is allowed to leak out in their threat to him.

He is separated at once from his ready cash and made to sign a check for whatever the mob demands; and he is not permitted to leave their sight until the check is cashed. The man is permitted to return home and the girl is then allowed to leave; and when the sucker returns to New York he finds that the object of his love has checked out of the hotel for unknown regions. But he has not, by any means, bought his way out of the limbo of Racketland. This chump is rated good for more than one touch and as soon as possible one of the mob visits his home town to tell him, with regret, that a few of the folks at headquarters were not taken care of, and unless he comes across with the expected amount, they will open up and demand prosecution. And finally the racket moll pays him a visit, generally leaving with a cash bonus after

telling her old friend that the escapade in Philadelphia resulted in her husband starting divorce action.

The mob worked the interstate racket for several years before the Federal authorities got busy and scattered the members. They were safe from prosecution while in action, for even were a sucker to learn of the deception, he could not dare the danger of open prosecution, for in reality he had violated the law, but this phase of the racket was secondary to the notoriety such prosecution promised. But the John Laws kept the boys on the move and the members, those still out of stir, are now using the Federal shields to shake down speak-easy proprietors, where the scores measure as dimes against the thousands of dollars harvested during the heydays of their reign. And some of their early victims may still be paying toll for the mob's silence.

For it is said that every thread in a well-woven skirt has the same relative strength as a regiment of soldiers.

CHAPTER XXV

SIDEWALK HUSTLERS

EVERY established and well conducted industry has its copyists, and so it is with the racket business. The large rewards earned by the exercise of one's wits, with no investment of capital attached, naturally attracts the lame-brain species of gyp artist, and he endeavors, in his mediocre manner, to extract an easy living from those whose mentality measures up—or down—to his own. This mongrel of the racket mob is known as A Sidewalk Hustler.

Every large city has its quota of these racketeers. They operate in the open, on streets where transient activity is at its greatest. They specialize in small scores; and their schemes are many and varied but, in the majority of instances, the stamp of fraud is too visible to hoodwink any one but an imbecile or a sucker who believes everything is on the level.

Dropping hoops was a favorite pastime with the sidewalk hustlers of days gone by, hoops being rings that were purchased in gross lots, the average cost being a dime apiece. The hustler would stand on a dark corner, directly beneath an electric or gas lamp,

and watch for his man. Just as the sucker would reach the corner, the hustler would stoop down and apparently pluck something from the sidewalk. This action would be timed so that as he straightened up he would accidently bump into the approaching pedestrian. Apologizing, he would hold up the ring, with a piece of glass set in to imitate a diamond, announcing that he had just found it. At the same time he would solicit the pedestrian's opinion as to its value.

If the sucker was foolish enough to examine the ring beneath the light, he might estimate its possible value as anything from a dollar to a thousand, whereupon the hustler would offer to sell it for a reduced price, adding that he had just been released from jail and might be arrested if he tried to pawn it. He would also advise the man that he was desperately in need of ready cash and was thus willing to sacrifice the bauble at a bargain figure. And strangely enough nine of every ten would gamble on the ring's value and hand the hustler enough cash to purchase ten gross of the cheap rings at wholesale prices.

This racket was worked mostly around ferry landings, docks, and factories where foreigners were employed. Young boys were considered good marks for the hoop droppers also, especially on pay day. The lad would be told he could pawn the ring for more than he was paying for it.

Another type of sidewalk hustler operated in league with a pawnshop proprietor. These racketeers were scattered all over in large cities and until the police caught up with them they managed to clean up handsome profits. Their method of procedure was to stand about a half block away from the pawnshop, and much like the hoop dropper, pick up a pawn ticket as the sucker approached. This they would offer to sell, suggesting he first go in and examine the article pledged. Or they would pass up the gesture of finding the ticket and saunter up to a window shopper, offering the ticket at a bargain figure, explaining in detail the nature and value of the article in pawn.

The sucker, if interested, would enter the shop and pay the nominal fee of fifty cents to examine the article. This, he would be assured by the shopkeeper, was worth many times more than the amount it was pledged for. But should he decide to purchase the ticket, and did so, he would redeem the article only to learn eventually that he had bought and paid for a piece of junk. Invariably he would try to pawn it for the same amount in the same shop, only to be informed that it wasn't wanted.

In many cases a switch was made some time between when the article was examined and when it was redeemed. When the prospective purchaser was shown the goods originally he saw a fine piece of jewelry.

Returning to the sidewalk to pay the hustler for the ticket, he would be told to drop around later and redeem the article in order to avoid any suspicion, the hustler inferring that the piece had been stolen. When redeemed later the purchaser received an article worth approximately one-twentieth of what he paid to procure, and since the ticket number matched the one on the article pledged, the redeemer had no excuse for a complaint.

The latest racket employed by the sidewalk hustlers, and one that is being worked all over the country, entails the use of an old express wagon. Two men generally operate from the truck, both wearing the conventional regalia of expressmen. Loaded on the truck are packages of furs. The men halt pedestrians as they pass the wagon, asking them if they are interested in a bargain in fur, doing their utmost, without actually admitting it, to convince the sucker that the merchandise is contraband.

If the man approached shows the slightest interest, the hustler hauls from beneath his apron a fur piece wrapped in brown paper. He quickly, but in plain view of the sucker, tears off a portion of the wrapper that looks suspiciously like an Express Co. label. He then bargains on a price, opening at the top figure expected. A sale is invariably made at a nice profit, the purchaser learning upon presenting it to his wife, sister or sweet-

heart that he has bought a rabbit skin and paid about fifty times its actual value.

These hustlers load up a wagon with skins at a wholesale market, arrange for the phoney wrappings and generally score a complete sell-out in a few hours. They select dusk as the best time to work, catching men on their way home from business.

The same racket is worked, slightly different, by Greeks who go from office to office selling embroidery to men who can't tell the difference between a chain stitch and a left hook. The goods are all machine made and while sold at wholesale to the hustlers at a dollar top for the best piece generally return them as high as a hundred dollars per article, the purchaser believing he is getting a bargain.

Sidewalk hustlers occasionally appear in the uniforms of U. S. sailors to hawk their phoney goods from door to door. These men deal mostly in rugs, perfumes, etc., offering them to unsuspecting business men and housewives, intimating they have been smuggled through the Customs. The rugs are carried in burlap bags, and dumped out on a floor they closely resemble the genuine Oriental article. The "sailor" glibly explains that he managed to get this ashore without detection and then makes a price that sounds ridiculously cheap for the real thing, figuring that a duty of something like fifty per cent is placed on such imported ar-

ticles. And your average law abiding citizen will swallow the bait, hook, line and rod, paying a nice fee for an article he could purchase in a department store around the corner for almost nothing.

A new wrinkle in sidewalk rackets, and one that is being well worked in and around the big cities, is an automobile tire scheme. The racketeer, appropriately dressed for the rôle, comes up to a motorist stopped by a traffic signal or about to park his car, and offers for sale a new tire of standard make for a fraction of its market value. The hustler gives the motorist the impression the tire has been stolen, which explains the ridiculously low price asked. If the prospective purchaser shows an inclination to pass up a "cat in a bag," the racketeer tears away part of the wrapping paper—which resembles in every way the wrapper placed on new tires—and allows him to see part of the name. With the sale made, the hustler fades out and some time later the motorist examines his purchase to find an old tire, well wrapped up, and possibly good for fifty or a hundred miles.

The hustler merely goes to the trouble of supplying wrappers for junked shoes. And with the racket practiced mostly on tourists and those leaving the city on the main highways, the squawks are few, and those registered seldom stand up.

GLOSSARY

Ace—One dollar.

Angel—The species of sucker who favors theatrical enterprises as an investment.

Badger Game—The racket in which a man of wealth is led into a compromising position with a supposedly married woman. Her alleged husband surprises them and demands money on the threat of prosecution and its accompanying publicity.

Belch—A complaint; a cry for aid.

Berry—A dollar.

Bit—The length of a prison sentence.

Bloomer—A mistake, failure.

Blow-Off—A climax.

Blurb—A eulogistic press notice.

Bohunk—An immigrant of Slavic extraction.

Booby Hatch—An insane asylum.

Booster—A shoplifter; one who steals from retail stores.

Bracelets—Handcuffs.

Broad—A girl.

Buck—One dollar.

Cadge—To get something for nothing.

Call Back—Any person solicited on a proposition who intimates an interest, but doesn't care to close the deal immediately.

Cannon—A pickpocket; also a revolver.

Cannon Mob—A group of three or more pickpockets.

Canvass—The talk used by a racketeer in interesting, convincing and "selling" a prospective sucker.

Case Note—A dollar bill.

Century Note—A hundred dollar bill.

Cheater—One who uses marked cards or loaded dice.

Chill—Contempt; "Putting on the chill"—viewing with a scornful eye.

Chiseler—One who works at any racket as long as there is a dollar in it.

Chump—The fellow who would give two twenties for a ten and laugh at the other fellow's lack of accuracy.

Clipped—Having been pleasantly separated from one's surplus currency.

Coke—Cocaine; also used in describing any type of narcotic.

Cooler—A deck of prepared cards; also used in referring to a police station.

Con-Man—Confidence worker; swindler.

Creed—A written authorization to solicit funds or advertising copy for an organization.

Cube—One of a pair of dice.

Cue—A signal; hint.

D. A.—District Attorney.

Dick—A detective.

Dip—A pickpocket.

Drop Joints—Places selected for conveniently "losing" articles referred to in "The Glim Dropper" and "Sidewalk Rackets."

Dukes—Hands.

Eye—Pinkerton detective; so called because the Pinkerton badge has the likeness of a human eye engraved upon it.

Fall Guy—The member of a racket mob who shoulders the blame in the event of arrest; generally the one with no previous record.

Fall Money—Cash placed away to pay for defense in event of arrest; money to be used to prevent incarceration; money for bond and legal fees.

Fanning Bee—A discussion.

Fence—One who purchases stolen goods.

Filly—A young girl.

Fin—Five dollars; also a hand.

Finder—One who follows up a dropper and finds "lost articles."

Fire-Proofer—A racketeer who preys on religious people.

First-Past-the-Post Operators—Men who procure the name of the winning horse in a race before it is flashed to the bookmaker. They make bets on the winning horse by a margin of seconds, and, of course, collect.

Flattie—A detective.

Fleece—Swindle.

Flop—A bed; sleep.

Gee-Gaws—Race horses.

Gin—A homemade product made popular with the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment. Rx—Two parts H_2O, one part C_2H_6O, two drams $C_3H_5(HO)$, a few drops of oil of juniper (if you have it handy). Shake well and take as desired.

Glim—A human eye.

Going South—Taking for oneself.

Gondorf Brothers—Noted confidence men of the past generation.

Grand—A thousand dollars.

Grape—Champagne.

Grease-Ball—A derelict of Racketland.

Green Goods—Counterfeit money.

Grouch Bag—A small chamois bag in which money is carried. Worn next to the skin, generally near one's heart.

Gun Mob—(Same as Cannon Mob).

Gun Moll—A member of the fair sex who hasn't any scruples anent larceny.

Heel—One who is despised.

Heeled—Armed with a gun; well supplied with money.

Hep—Wise.

High Score—The gross amount of money mulcted from a sucker.

Hijacker—One who robs bootleggers.

Hoofing—Dancing.

Hoop or Hoople—A finger ring.

Hustler—A racketeer; also a prostitute who solicits men on the streets.

In the Bag—Anything that is fixed in advance. Used generally in referring to fixed sporting events.

In the Clear—Safe; net proceeds.

In the Red—In the deficit column.

Iron Men—Silver dollars.

John Law—A policeman or detective.

Jug—A cell.

Junk—Dope; narcotics. Also referred to as cheap jewelry.

Junk Pusher—A peddler of narcotics.

Kale—Money.
Key Man—The member of a mob who closes the deal.
Keyster—A suitcase; traveling bag.
Kick—A pocket.
Knockdown—An introduction.
Lam—To run.
Lammer—One who runs.
Lammister—A fugitive from justice.
Lamp—An eye; to look.
Leery—Suspicious; afraid.
Lush Worker—One who picks the pockets of sleeping drunks.
Map—A check.
Map Dropper—One who cashes bad checks.
Maze Concession—A building with criss-cross aisles, hard to find exit once inside.
Mob—Two or more men engaged in any type of racket.
Moll—A woman.
Monicker—Name.
Mosey—Move slowly.
Mouthpiece—An attorney.
Mug—A photograph.
Notch Joint—House of prostitution.
Needled—Charged with dope.
Note Layer—A short change artist.
On the Make—Working at a racket.
On the Up-and-Up—Truthful; honest.
P. A.—Public Accountant.
Pan-a-face—To criticize.
Panhandler—A common beggar.

Pen—A penitentiary.
Peepers—Eyes.
Pinks—Pinkerton detectives.
Plant—A hiding place.
Poke—A purse.
Pols—Rackets based on political projects.
Puff—A flattering write-up.
Queer—Counterfeit money.
Queer Shover—One who circulates counterfeit money.
Rap—A complaint filed with the authorities.
Rapper—A complainant.
Rattler—A railroad train.
Real McCoy—The genuine goods.
Rod—A revolver.
Sawbuck—Ten dollars.
Score—The proceeds of a transaction in a racket.
Screw—A prison guard; also used in telling one to move or leave.
Scratch—Silver money.
Seagoing Hack—A horse-drawn open carriage.
Shake Down—To extort money under false pretenses.
Sharpshooter—A racketeer who never takes chances of losing.
Shark—One especially gifted in his calling.
Shapes—Crooked dice.
Sheet Passer—One who procures cash for forged checks.
Shillaber—One who acts as decoy.
Shiv—A knife.
Shommus—A policeman.
Sixer—Six months.

Skimmer—A flat hat.

Spiel—A routine of dialogue.

Squawk—A complaint.

Stall—A member of pickpocket group; the one who interrupts those who would chase the member carrying the stolen booty.

Steerer—One who locates victims and introduces them to a racketeer.

Stiff—A dead person.

Stir—A prison.

Stretch—A prison sentence.

Sugar—Money.

Tailed—Followed.

Tap—One who is known to subscribe to charitable projects.

Tat—A miniature die (called dice in the singular in Racketland) carrying only the numbers 4, 5 and 6.

Taking a Fall—Getting arrested.

Tout—One who peddles information on the horse races.

Turkey Road Show—A traveling theatrical organization composed of second class players, playing wherever dates can be procured.

Twist—A dancing girl.

Wise Money—Money supposed to be wagered on a sure thing.

Wire—The member of a pickpocket group who extracts the booty from the victim's clothes.

Yap—A fool.

Yen—A strong desire.

THE END

BRENTANO'S